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FEATURE STORY

The INSPECTOR'S STRANGE CASE

by Gottlieb Jacobs

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Just a Few Remarks

AS our principal object is to please our readers, we have recently secured a series of intensely fascinating articles from Russell Raymond Voorhees, an expert on psychology and science. They will begin in our next issue, and cover such subjects as Astrology, Palmistry, Chirognomy, Physiogomy, Phrenology, Numerology and several other sciences. The articles are written in simple language which any one can understand. They clearly and concisely explain the meaning of each subject so you can see how horoscopes are cast, lines in the palm are read, characters told by the hands, what the features betray, what qualifications are shown by the head, the way to judge people by their handwriting and how men's dispositions are shown by numbers. The author does not vouch for the truth or the infallibility of these studies, but explains all that is known about them and lets the reader judge results for himself. As most people like to peer into the mysteries of life, these articles should be very instructive and interesting. In addition to the new series there will be a gripping feature detective story by Jack Bechdolt entitled "The Museum Mystery," which you cannot fail to enjoy. The usual number of short stories will appear, among which are "The Man in Chance Street," by Jackson J. Smith; "The Courage of Ignorance," by Katherine Stagg; "The Token of Fire," by Bayard Yador, and another of O. W. Simons's fanciful yarns entitled "Miss Lethbridge, the Cat."

We have prepared some mighty fine short articles for you, besides an unusually interesting collection of oddities and queer occurrences in all parts of the world. The next number is going to be one of the very best we ever published. We therefore hope you will tell all your friends about it, as we want it to be as widely read as possible.

THE EDITOR.

The INSPECTOR'S STRANGE CASE

by

Gottlieb Jacobs

CHAPTER ONE

"INSPECTOR, do you want to prevent a murder?"

A gaunt, virile man was the speaker; thin-lipped, keen-eyed and blunt-featured, with an all too rigid back, and lily-white hands that appeared bloodless. His dark hair, graying at the temples, glistened almost fiercely in the yellow glare of the electric lights. He was dressed exceedingly well—from head to heel he was impeccable. Stalking into the plainly furnished office of Inspector Garland, he had ceremoniously seated himself and spoken the question with a low, clear voice:

"Inspector, do you want to prevent murder?"

The chief of the homicide bureau had never been asked such a weird question. Altogether it struck his ears grotesquely, unnaturally. His mind lingered on the very fantasy of it for a brief moment, then he tossed his pen on the desk and surveyed the other ponderingly. A quizzical smile curved the corner of his full lips. Yet the inquiry in his eyes was not unmingled with curiosity.

"Of course," he agreed with a smile. "You don't suppose I'm head of this department for any other purpose, do you? I gather from your inquiry that you have information of a serious nature."

"Only too serious!" His tone was dramatical. "But first let me introduce myself." He thrust a hand into an inner pocket and drew forth from its recess a small case, from which he extracted a card. This he handed to the police official.

"You see, inspector," he began, as Garland placed the card on the desk, "I am giving a reception Tuesday evening in honor of Coles Winston, who is an intimate friend of mine. Mr. Winston has just returned to New York City after being abroad for five years. Now, Winston is rather a hasty old gentleman, very quick-tempered and irritable, and as a result has incurred the enmity of many a former friend. Among these was Natio Guidoano, the well-known Italian opera singer, who is even more hot-tempered than is Mr. Winston. That, I presume, is because of his Latin blood. To this Italian I find it necessary to extend an invitation, for besides being a personal acquaintance of mine he is remotely related to my wife. Not to have invited him would have caused a domestic broil, and would have been misconstrued by him as an insult.

"Now I am coming to the gist of my story. Several years ago—six, I believe—my wife,

Mr. Winston and I were in Venice as the guests of Signor Guidoano. An argument ensued between two gentlemen—I forget concerning what—and Winston and our host took opposite sides. It soon developed into a full-fledged quarrel, much to the displeasure of the more staid guests present, and efforts to smother it were unsuccessful. At length Mr. Winston remarked upon the character of the signor, which made the Italian's face grow crimson. I assure you, inspector, that I fancied I saw red in the eyes of the signor. Blows followed, and before the two could be torn apart blood was running.

"The following day Signor Guidoano sent a written challenge to Winston, alleging that he had been insulted in his own home and before his own guests. The signor would be pleased, the letter stated, to meet Winston at any time and with whatever weapons he chose. Mr. Winston, however, is an individual who can snap his fingers in the face of anything, even of such a rock-bound thing as publication of his cowardice, and he refused to accept the challenge. In a reply he averred that it was not a modern American custom to revert to blood-letting merely to soothe one's feelings, and that he, being a modern American, could do nothing other than disregard the signor's sanguinary proposal. Whereupon Guidoano, misunderstanding Mr. Winston to signify that he was an intended murderer," became still more enraged. Winston a week later laughingly showed me a counter letter that he had received from the signor, stating that should they ever cross each other's path there would be trouble of a nature punishable by a capital penalty.

"This, of course, inspector, could mean nothing but that the Italian would kill Winston on sight!

"So you see the unfortunate dilemma in which I am placed. Since that deplorable event they have not met. But they are certain to meet at the reception, unless something unforeseen takes place. However, I am not one to place much reliance in such a measly hope. I have given serious thought to postponing the entertainment, but unluckily I have already had the invitations posted, and to do so—well, inspector, it would mean more harm to my social position than can possibly be imagined. Besides, there is my wife to consider."

Charles Detmer paused. In his eyes was a hint of moisture; in his tone a slight quiver. It was evident that inwardly he was experiencing the pangs of trepidation. Appeal fairly trembled on his lips; his lynx eyes now seemed soft and hopefully beseeching. He looked expectantly at the inspector.

"A very embarrassing situation indeed!" Inspector Garland commented. "I had always thought that such predicaments and occurrences were confined to the pen of the writer." There was a look of strict interest on his bronzed, grim-jawed face; the other's story, it was apparent, had instilled within him a feeling of concern. For a brief instant he considered. Then he inquired:

"Do you know whether the two men are aware that the other will be present at the reception, Mr. Detmer?"

"Yes, inspector," the other replied. "The name of the guest of honor is always present on the invitation. That accounts for Signor Guidoano's knowledge of Mr. Winston's presence. And by—by a twist of fate, one might call it, Winston has been informed by a mutual acquaintance that the Italian will be there. Were this not the case we might succeed, with a little ingenuity and tact, in making a meeting between the two men avoidable."

Mr. Detmer reached in an inner pocket and drew forth an enveloped, blue-rimmed invitation card, which he handed to Inspector Garland.

"I had hoped," he remarked by way of explanation, "that Signor Guidoano, knowing that Mr. Winston was to be my guest of honor, would reply stating his inability to appear at the reception. But now I am robbed of even this flimsy hope. And on the contrary I now feel certain that there certainly will be trouble, for there is undoubtedly, reading between the lines, a hidden threat in the signor's note of acceptance."

The card was a uniformly pretty invitation, printed in italics, requesting the presence of Signor Natio Guidoano at the reception given in honor of Mr. Coles Winston. At the bottom there was scrawled in ink a flourishing handwriting:

"Mr. Charles Detmer.

"Sir: It affords me great pleasure to say that I shall be more than delighted to meet Mr. Winston, after having failed to do so in a period of six years.

"Sincerely,

"Natio Guidoano."

There was a frown of displeasure on Inspector Garland's face as he handed the letter back to Mr. Detmer. Questioning uncertainty puckered his brow.

"Yes, I agree with you that there's a hidden meaning of menace in that note," he admitted with logical ill grace. "This signor—do you think that he would stir up trouble again; that he would carry out a threat made six years ago, and unquestionably on the spur of the moment? Six years is quite a span of time, you know. Possibly he has either forgotten, or allowed bygones to be bygones—buried the hatchet, so to speak."

Mr. Detmer smiled sorrowfully.

"I sincerely hope that you are right in your estimation, inspector, and perhaps you are. Possibly the signor has forgotten or repented of his folly. But I doubt it. I admit that six years is a length of time in which a turn of feeling may have taken place, but Guidoano, you know, is Italian. The hot blood of the Latins is not frozen by time. The signor may or may not make an attack upon Mr. Winston's life; however, I am not prepared to take such a broad chance of allowing matters to go as they are when human life is at stake.

"Now, inspector, I have a plan that, in anticipation of trouble, will prevent any bloodshed that may occur if nothing is done. I would have carried out this project of mine without coming here and taking up your valuable time, but for one reason. Undoubtedly you'll agree with me that there is no other course open to me than to prevent the two men from meeting at the reception. Therefore I intend to write the signor an anonymous letter of warning, informing him that should he appear at the reception the worst would follow. And the reason I am here is because I am fully aware that the scheme does not exactly conform with police laws and regulations. Being a lawful citizen, I do not want to become entangled in morbid complications should anything occur."

The inspector was silent for the moment.

"And suppose, Mr. Detmer," he said at length, in a tone vaguely sinister, "suppose the Italian refuses to comply with the instructions in the letter—suppose he goes to the reception in spite of it?"

"Were he to do that I would be forced to abduct him for the time being until the entertainment is safely over. Failing in that, as is possible, I would prevent Mr. Winston from being present, using forceful means if necessary. Yes, inspector, I would do it, even though he is my guest of honor. I do not intend to stand quietly by and witness, possibly, murder being committed."

Inspector Garland appeared displeased. The ghost of a frown lurked about his heavy mouth.

"But your methods are illegal, unlawful," he protested, a rising inflection in his voice.

"That is why I am here. I want the help of the police in this matter, for as you yourself said, it is their duty to prevent crime. Perhaps you have a better plan to see that the two men do not meet; one that will not disrupt the ethics of the law."

"I am sorry, Mr. Detmer, but I believe I cannot offer any proposal to relieve the situation," the inspector replied after a moment of contemplation. "Nor can you hope to have the law acquiesce in a plan that is unlawful. I cannot do anything to the signor, even though he may intend murder, for as an officer of the law I cannot regard this matter through any other eyes than the law's. And the eyes of the law disregard future intentions; it is the misdeeds at which they glare. However, I will detail two of my best men to watch the Italian at the reception, if that is satisfactory."

Mr. Detmer seemed vexed. He had expected the inspector to be in hearty accord with his plan to prevent serious trouble. He had not believed that his plea would be so utterly ignored. His sharp, slate-colored eyes showed his pique and when he spoke there was a note of injury in his tone.

"I had hoped, inspector, that you would lend me some aid in this morbid affair. Of course I shall accept the services of any of-

ficers that you may detail to appear at the entertainment, but I believe that if there will be trouble, the presence of your men will not tend to stop it. Is your decision as to your inability to do anything more final?"

"Yes," Inspector Garland declared bluntly. "That is final. I am sorry, but I dare not overstep my position."

"Well, inspector, I shall bid you good-day." At the door Mr. Detmer turned. His eyes seemed to flash suddenly; there was a foreign, dimly sinister light in them, as if a noxious realization had dawned upon him. "But I warn you," he announced grimly, leveling a finger, "I warn you that, law or no law, I am determined to stop at nothing to prevent this crime. I believe that the end justifies the means. If you, as an officer of the law, do not intend to help me, then I shall carry out the plans that I originally suggested. Either Signor Guidoano or Mr. Winston will not appear at that reception!"

CHAPTER TWO

IT was Greggson, the valet, who made the horrible discovery. Coles Winston, his master, had directed him to have his bath ready at five o'clock, and a trifle before that hour Greggson had knocked. There came, however, no response. Thinking that possibly the master had not heard him, or was too absorbed in his inevitable book to answer, Greggson had rapped again, this time very much louder. Again there came no sound in reply. And once more the valet had knocked; once more silence from within.

Greggson was becoming alarmed. In all his three years as Mr. Winston's valet he had never had to rap more than once without being admitted. But pshaw! Mr. Winston had undoubtedly fallen asleep, or perhaps he had left the room? As to the first, Greggson knew his master to be a sound sleeper, never disturbed by such grueling things as insomnia and indigestion; therefore the contention of his being asleep was not groundless. But the second? The valet was keenly, painfully aware that under ordinary circumstances Mr. Winston would not have left the room, for he was to dress at six for the Detmer reception, of which he was to be the guest of honor. Besides, the door was locked. Mr. Winston was not in the habit of keying his sleeping chamber whenever he left it.

Somewhat quiveringly, he bent down and peered through the keyhole. Greggson was a very imaginative man-servant, and his mind at this particular moment was pervaded with all sorts of weird fantasies and horrors. As a limited segment of the room sprang into view an involuntary shudder rasped through him. Mundane and indescribable terrors loomed before his mental vision.

There was the tall, staid-looking bureau near the end of the room; the great brass bed, a huge affair that had been imported from a chateau in northern France. In the center of the chamber, separated from the floor by a thick, Cimmerian-like carpet, was situated a short table, its lurid surface glistening sharply in the glitter of the electric lights. But it was none of these things that caused Greggson to straighten up with a little sucking-in of his breath.

For a moment he stood before the door, undecided as to the next move, his heart pounding away as if it were a sledgehammer. Rabid fright had crept into the look of appeal in his eyes. Then he turned swiftly and pattered down the steps into the hall.

"Larkin!" he called, thickly, hoarsely.

A tall, sharp-featured, rigid-looking man—Larkin, the butler—came out of the kitchen and approached the valet. There was a look of interrogation on his face.

"Yes?" he inquired.

Greggson pointed a trembling, significant hand up the oak-balustraded stairs.

"I—I think something's wrong up there, Larkin," he quavered. "Something's wrong—in Mr. Winston's chamber. I know there is—I feel it in my bones."

"Wrong? What could be wrong?" The butler stared incredulously at the other.

"I don't know. But the door of his room is locked and—and——"

"Well?" said the butler sharply, as the other paused.

"He's—he's lying on the floor," Greggson blurted out sobbingly, "face downward, and—

and there's a smoking pistol by his side! The room—it's just full of it—full of smoke! Oh, God, I think it's—murder!"

Larkin did not wait to hear the last. With a series of agile bounds he was at the top of the stairs. He knocked lustily on the locked door, each time with rising inflection. Then, as Greggson had done, he stooped and applied his eye to the keyhole. The shaking valet had followed him up the stairs, terror penned sharply on his features.

Larkin arose slowly from the floor, then turned tersely to the valet:

"Greggson," he instructed, "get the police on the phone! This thing does look serious, to say the least. Have them bring some officers at once."

As Greggson clattered down the stairs the front door shook in its hinges. A moment later a tall, singularly attractive young man, garbed in a fastidious manner, extracted a key from the lock and closed the door behind him.

"Ah, Mr. Wyleman, I'm glad you've come!" The old valet shuffled up to the young man and turned, shuddering, to glance cautiously up the stairs. "There's some trouble, Mr. Wyleman; it's about your uncle."

Howard Wyleman's thin-lipped mouth opened with surprise. "Trouble? About my uncle?" he interrogated, glancing swiftly in the direction of Winston's chamber.

"Yes, and it looks serious." Together they ascended the stairs, Wyleman's breath short and hot.

As the others had done, so did Howard Wyleman. He shook the door in its hinges until it rattled threateningly, and called the name of Mr. Winston vehemently, his voice echoing and re-echoing through the vastness of the house. Then he stooped to look through the keyhole. Greggson and the butler hovered nervously over him.

Presently Wyleman straightened up. A wan, pallid color had supplanted his usual tinge; in his eyes was troubled alarm. His whole being seemed to quake.

"One moment," he breathed to the others, and there was a catch in his throat. Turning, he raced down into the hall and flung open the door to the street.

"Smith," he called to a keen-eyed young man—the chauffeur—who sat slouched in the front seat of an enormous red car, "drive like the devil to the police station, and get some cops here at once!"

CHAPTER THREE

HEAVILY, silently, the procession trooped into the hallway. Inspector Garland, his face flushed the dull red of a boiled lobster, headed the line. Following him came Lieutenant of Police O'Brien, elephantine, stolid, with tiny, roving eyes. Two patrolmen and Smith, the chauffeur, who edged furtively at the end of the file, brought up the rear.

Wyleman called anxiously to them and they marched up the steps, which creaked under the heavy weight.

"Well," said the inspector, addressing Winston's nephew, "what's the matter here? It's about Winston, is it? I remember now; I've been forewarned to expect some trouble, too. What is it?"

"Something's happened to my uncle," Wyleman said apprehensively. "He's lying on the floor and there's a revolver near him. Besides, the door is locked. There was only one key to open it, and that was always left in the keyhole inside the room. The only thing to do was to call the police immediately."

"You did right." Inspector Garland grasped the knob of the door and rattled it. "Here, O'Brien," he directed, "break in this door. It's a little shaky, anyway."

The mighty Irishman went about his task quietly. Again and again his massive shoulders thumped effectively against the door until at last, loose from its hinges, it fell into the chamber with a resounding noise. Huddled solemnly together, the little party crossed over the fallen door.

Crumpled on the floor lay the heavy-set figure of Coles Winston. As the inspector rolled him over with the toe of his foot, a face resembling that of a gormand was revealed to the group of startled men. It was that of a man of seventy, whose physical prowess, as was apparent by his herculean frame, had not been deadened by advancing

years. There was also an ugly snarl on his face, as if he had been intensely angry before meeting his violent death.

A revolver lay on the floor at his side.

Inspector Garland quickly recovered from the first shock incidental to such a discovery. Once more he was the calloused police official. Accustomed to tragic scenes and the shadow of death and crime, it had become second nature to him to begin instantly the work devolving upon him as an agent of law and justice.

Stooping, he touched Winston's turgid forehead, lifted the arms and dropped them heavily.

"I'm not a doctor, but I can see that he's been dead for at least half an hour," he asserted, turning to the others, who were standing, awe-struck, near by. "What do you know about this?" He wheeled suddenly upon the trembling Greggson. "You are Mr. Winston's valet, aren't you? You see more of him than any one else."

Tears started into Greggson's eyes. "Good God, sir, you don't think I——"

"Answer my question," interrupted the inspector, severely. "What do you know about this murder?"

Larkin stepped forward. "One moment," he broke in quietly. "I think I know more about this matter than the valet."

"You do?" The inspector turned to glare at him witheringly. "Now, who are you?"

"Larkin, the butler."

"All right, Larkin the butler," the police official sneered, "you'll speak when I ask you to." He turned to Greggson. "Well?"

"What is it you want to know, sir?"

Inspector Garland placed a finger in the palm of his other hand.

"Did Mr. Winston have any more servants besides yourself and this Larkin?"

"Yes, sir."

"How many?"

"Two—a housekeeper and a cook."

"Where are they?"

"The boss gave them the day off, sir."

"All right. Now tell me all you know about this affair. And don't omit a detail, either."

"I know nothing of value, I'm afraid, sir. Mr. Winston was to attend a reception this evening and told me to be certain to be in attendance upon him at five o'clock. In the meantime, he said, I could go wherever I pleased."

"M-m-m, I see," grunted the inspector as Greggson paused. Then: "Is that all you know?"

"Yes, sir. I returned at that time, and finding the door closed, guessed that something was wrong and peeped through the keyhole."

Garland looked at Howard Wyleman.

"Can you add anything to that?" he questioned.

"I'm afraid not. I usually call here every Monday, about six o'clock, as the servants can testify, to see my uncle. He and I were on the best of terms and his death is a very shocking and disagreeable surprise to me."

"Now, what do you know—er—Larkin?" Inspector Garland turned to the butler.

There was a hint of disdain in the servant's tone as he replied:

"It's about time you came around to me with that question. You certainly know by now that I was the only one in the house while——"

"Well, what do you know?" broke in the official impatiently, churlishly.

"Enough to make this no longer a mystery. A little previous to four o'clock a visitor called and gave me a card to take up to my employer. As soon as Mr. Winston read the name on it his face seemed to brighten, and he asked me to show the caller up into his chamber. I was a good deal surprised at this request, as Mr. Winston usually comes down into the reception-room to meet his visitors. But I said nothing, obeyed his instructions and forgot all about the matter until Greggson called me from the kitchen to investigate. I did not see the man go out."

"You heard no shot?" inquired the inspector.

"No, sir."

The police official glanced furtively at the pistol, picked it up and examined it. Suddenly his face brightened.

"Ah, a Maxim silencer!" he exclaimed. "No wonder you did not hear any shots." He handed the weapon to O'Brien, who stared at it briefly, then passed it to Wyleman.

Garland gave his attention to every one present.

"The conclusion to be drawn thus far is logical," he declared. "This visitor quarreled with Mr. Winston—or should I say that he had it in for him?—drew his pistol fitted with this silencer and murdered Winston on the spot. He then dropped the weapon, extracted the key and locked the door from the outside. Larkin did not hear him leave because he was in the kitchen and the criminal undoubtedly took extra precautions to make no noise. Mr. Winston's murderer then, very likely, got rid of the key. Now, Larkin, would you recognize this man if you saw him again?"

Larkin meditated. "Yes, I believe I would," he responded.

"You say you carried his card up to Mr. Winston; didn't you so much as glance at it?"

"Yes, sir, I always look at visitors' cards. Mr. Winston required that of me. He believed it was for the best in case of an emergency."

"The name—what was it?" Garland bent forward eagerly.

Larkin considered.

"I am not very certain what it was," he said lingeringly, "it was such a queer name. Italian, I believe it was, ending in o."

"Italian? Guidoano—Natio Guidoano—was that the name?" the inspector asked quickly and with some agitation.

The expression of perplexity left Larkin's face.

"Yes, that was the name," he agreed.

Garland looked about him. "In that case the card must be in this room, unless"—and his face darkened—"unless that damned wop took it with him when he absconded. Yet I don't think he did that. Criminals usually forget everything but their safety for the time being."

After a five minutes' hasty search, during which time not a word was spoken save for an occasional muttering from Greggson, an exclamation that sounded a glad discovery broke from Larkin. He had been searching about the grim figure that lay on the floor, and now he straightened up, a catch of revelation in his tone.

"Ah! Here it is!" He brought his hand from the dark recess of Winston's pocket; in it lay a tiny card, the article that had caused the exploration of the room's contents. He looked at the card eagerly, triumphantly, then handed it to the inspector.

Garland took it expectantly. He was not disappointed. In the center of the card, in pretty italic type, was the name "Natio Guidoano."

The police official passed the card around; a cynical smile lit his heavy features. He said not a word until the article was returned to him, and it was carefully hidden away upon his person.

"I have here the evidence," he said after a length of quietude that bore heavily upon all those present— "I have here the evidence that will send some one to the chair!" He patted his pocket significantly, his tone eminently impressive. The slight emphasis that he laid upon the "some one" was indicative of worlds. Amid the gloomy silence that followed he turned to one of the patrolmen.

"Scarmine," he instructed, "ring up the coroner's office and have them send a man up. I'm leaving now to get this Italian suspect, and O'Brien will look after things while I am gone. There's no time to be lost, if matters are to be straightened up as quickly as possible. What's the matter, Mr. Wyleman? Your face is ashen!"

The nephew of Coles Winston nodded his head admitantly.

"I'm terribly agitated," he said. "I know I look haggard—it's the shock of this awful thing, the disagreeable surprise of it. If you don't mind I'll go downstairs and wait there for any inquiries you might want to put to me."

"Pretty unfortunate for him," remarked Garland, staring after the retreating figure. "Think of it, losing your nearest relative, and that by murder."

O'Brien, who had been examining the floor with keen interest, looked up quickly, a note of doubt on his face.

"Think so?" he muttered thickly, his brows elevated in mild surprise. "I understand that, being Winston's only relative, he will inherit everything the old fellow left."

The inspector looked at him incredulously. He had a profound veneration for the lieutenant's stolid yet always shrewd, discerning

ability, and there was a hint in the other's tone that made his eyes narrow and cloud suspiciously.

"Do you think Wyleman did this?" he exacted..

The lieutenant shrugged his huge shoulders.

"Oh, I don't know," he muttered. "I was just considering that Wyleman was Winston's only heir."

CHAPTER FOUR

VAGUE misgivings that had been germinating in Garland's mind now swelled into a jumbled mass of confused ideas. The mistrust that O'Brien's quiet words had sent into his brain was adding fuel to the seething fires of suspicion. So Wyleman was to be reckoned with, too! Now that he thought of it, he could not help wondering why he had not at least suspected him before. Was not Wyleman Winston's only heir? Had he proven an alibi? Why had he appeared so agitated, more so than the others?

True, the finger of suspicion pointed unfalteringly at the Italian, Natio Guidoano. The presence of his card on the scene of the murder was explained. Again, the Latinian and the gruff Mr. Winston had been enemies. Guidoano had therefore a motive.

But could not all this in reality be merely fiction? Could not Larkin, this firm-jawed, stern-looking servant, have invented this likely story for one reason or another? It was very improbable, but still plausible. Yes, where had Larkin been at the time preceding the tragedy? Why had he not taken the holiday when Winston had granted it? There were no facts, no alibi, that Larkin himself was not the murderer.

And, working upon this basis, what proof did he, Garland, have that even Greggson's story was true?

Among these four men, then, was to be found the murderer. The first supposition, of course, was that Guidoano was the guilty party. Circumstantial evidence asserted unwaveringly that he was the perpetrator of the crime. But circumstantial evidence was a nasty thing to rely upon; what if Natio Guidoano could prove an alibi? In that case the rod of suspicion would fall heavily upon Larkin, for if the Italian was innocent and had not visited the home of Coles Winston, then the butler had lied, apparently, when he said otherwise.

Meanwhile, however, he must not forget Wyleman. He would find out where the nephew of the murdered man had been before dusk, and verify the statement.

Inspector Garland was aroused from his reveries by the voice of Scarmine, who reported that the coroner would be over in half an hour.

"Scarmine, and you, too, Kimmerley," the police official said, addressing the two patrolmen in a tone inaudible to the others in the room, "I want you to assume the duties of plainclothes men to-night, and longer if necessary, to find out where young Wyleman was just before the crime. I don't want it known that I suspect him. You can begin by inquiring of Wyleman's chauffeur without raising his suspicions, and then verifying anything that he says. Find out if any one saw him from about four to five, and where. Report any information to me immediately."

Scarmine and Kimmerley saluted, nodded curtly and were gone. The inspector turned to O'Brien.

"You will remain here, lieutenant," he instructed, "until the coroner is through with his inspection. If he asks for some one to take charge of things until the inquest, suggest young Johnny Lynne. That boy may be undeveloped, but he's clever, and may run down our man before the investigation. So long, Pat. I'm off to get this Italian suspect."

As Garland clattered down the stairs a thought rushed into his brain. What of Charles Detmer, the man who had visited him ten days ago—the sterile-looking individual who had pleaded so earnestly for help to prevent a possible crime? Might he not in some way be connected with the affair? Assuredly he made an effort to do something; perhaps the murder of Coles Winston was the result of that effort. Then Detmer was to be reckoned with, also. To all appearances he was not altogether immune of the crime.

Garland grasped the telephone, that stood on a tiny table in the hall, and ticked impatiently until the operator's sweetly inquiring voice wafted to his ears. Then he remembered that he did not know the phone number of Charles Detmer. With a curse he jerked the receiver onto the hook and picked up the directory at his side. A minute later he called gruffly:

"Give me 8852 Riverside."

A tick followed; there came the hundred-and-one slight sounds that a telephone wire usually conveys, adding irritability to Garland's impatience. Finally a deep, sonorous voice informed him majestically that he was speaking to an occupant of the residence of Mr. Charles Detmer.

"Who am I talking to now?" the inspector wanted to know.

"The butler, sir."

"Is Mr. Detmer in?"

"Yes, but it is only on a matter of great importance I could call him, as Mr. Detmer is engaged in entertaining his guests."

This irrelevance increased Garland's churlishness a hundredfold, and he cried:

"To blazes with your 'matters of importance'! Just you tell Detmer Inspector Garland wants to speak to him, and fetch him over at your end of the wire mighty sudden!"

Several minutes later the tranquil voice of Charles Detmer inquired:

"That you, inspector?"

"Yes. I'm the police officer you paid a visit to several days ago at my office. Remember? I want to ask you a few questions. Your entertainment is on, I understand?"

"Yes, in full swing. But my guest of honor, Mr. Winston, has not yet arrived." His tone was anxious. "What's keeping him I can't understand. I'm afraid he won't come; my guests don't seem to take it much to heart, however. But what——"

Garland interrupted flatly: "Is this Italian, Guidoano, at your home?"

"Signor Guidoano?" There was perplexity in Detmer's tone. "No, he hasn't come. I can't imagine——"

"Listen," Garland said, his voice terse and business-like. "Winston's been murdered! That's why he hasn't come to the reception. And Guidoano's also absent. Looks mighty peculiar, especially when this signor had written that——"

A startled gasp from the other end of the wire cut him off. "Coles Winston — murdered?" rasped Detmer's voice incredulously. "How? When? Where? By whom?"

"At his home, about two hours ago," the inspector answered calmly. Shot by a pistol with a Maxim silencer. We don't know as yet who the culprit is, but we're on his trail. We're certain to land him in a day or two."

"Oh, I knew it—I knew it!" Detmer's voice broke out almost in a wail. "My best friend dead — murdered! It's all your fault — the fault of the police. Didn't I implore you to help stop the crime? Didn't I warn you? And you—you disregarded it. You could have saved Winston, but you didn't. You'll have God to reckon with for this, inspector. You're as much to blame for this crime as the real murderer himself!"

Garland's temper blazed forth and a stinging reply surged to his lips. But on the instant he realized that Detmer was not his inferior and he checked himself. With a shrug of his heavy shoulders he said:

"You don't know what you are saying, Mr. Detmer. I believe I had informed you that in the performance of my duty I could do nothing to prevent the tragedy. Being on the side of the law, I must conform with the policies of the law. And that is not for one man to throw aside to suit his whim."

"The law!" Detmer answered bitterly. "The law pretends to prevent crime, and at the same time allows it. Who is it that——"

"That'll do, Mr. Detmer," Garland growled impatiently. "I didn't call you up for any panning, but to get the address of this Italian signor. If you'll let me have it, I'll be very much obliged."

Equipped with the address of Natio Guidoano and with a pair of bracelets and a revolver that nestled snugly in separate hind-pockets, Garland set out in Wyleman's car for his destination. The night was murky, the looming skies void of stars. Yet the riding, with Smith at the wheel, was graceful and quick; within fifteen minutes the car halted before the Stewart House, a gorgeous hotel

with a massive front, patronized alike by the self-made man, wealthy sycophant and the successful culturist. Without so much as a word to Smith the inspector was in the house and up the steps with more than natural velocity, to the utter dismay of the red-faced night clerk. He stopped before the door of apartment G 4 and rapped.

A sheepish-looking butler opened the door several inches and peered out through the crack, his eyebrows raised in inquiry.

"Is Mr. Guidoano in?" the inspector inquired.

"No," was the answer. "He has gone to the Detmer reception. Is there any message?"

Garland planted his foot in the crack of the door.

"Guidoano is here," he said firmly, "and I want to see him."

"You are mistaken, sir," the servant replied after a moment of bewildered contemplation. "The signor is not here. If you wish to wait for him, you may do so."

Garland nodded curtly and quietly followed the other into the luxuriantly furnished apartment. He seated himself in an armchair, the insides of which fairly sank under his heavy form, helped himself to a long black, made-in-Rome cigar and awaited the arrival of Natio Guidoano.

One hour later a key turned in the lock, the door opened and the Italian singer stepped into the room.

CHAPTER FIVE

INSPECTOR GARLAND had never seen such a strikingly attractive man as Natio Guidoano. Save for the stalwart manner in which he carried himself and a firm chin and grim jaw, there was a trace of femininity in everything about him. His eyes were large pools of liquid black, his hair a glistening shade in the flare of the lights. He was dressed immaculately in full-dress suit and a high hat.

He did not immediately notice the police official, but asked of the butler, who had come pattering into the room, for the time.

At length his dark eyes rested on the inspector and a soft "Ah!" escaped him. This was accompanied by a deft, interrogatory look. With an apologetic air he seated himself opposite Garland.

"You are——?" he began, his tone extremely polite.

"I'm Inspector Garland," that personage announced quickly. "Garland, of the Homicide Bureau."

The Latinian appeared ruffled.

"You wish something?" he murmured.

"Certainly," Garland informed him, getting down to the point at once. "There's been a crime committed and appearances implicate you. I could have you arrested on the strength of that alone, but I'm straying from the general formal police method by doing a little detective work on my own hook. This case looks mighty peculiar and I'm interested. Besides, it takes time to swear out a warrant and anything may happen in that interval."

Garland's always-alert eyes noted as he paused the look of calm bewilderment on the face of the other. A troubled expression had stolen into the Italian's eyes; they seemed weary, bleared, with a far-off, perturbed look. The inspector hastened to continue:

"Some old fellow by the name of Coles Winston's been found dead in his home. A card was found in the room bearing your name, thus implicating you. I don't mean by that that you had necessarily anything to do with the crime. On the other hand, don't get the impression that I believe entirely in your innocence. The reason I came here as I did, without a warrant, is because I know that you will not attempt anything foolhardy. You have everything to lose by a rash act — position, honor, friendship—and nothing to gain. If you were a person less fortunate, who would lose nothing by an attempt to escape, I would act differently. As it is——

"You knew Winston. You quarreled with him a long time ago, I'll admit, but a bitter quarrel is not very much dulled by the lapse of time. You threatened him publicly with death. When Mr. Detmer invited you to an affair in honor of this Winston you returned a note of acceptance that, although polite, hints vaguely at danger. Just before the re-

ception Winston is murdered. Your card is found on the dead man's person; the butler reports that some one greatly resembling you visited the house just before Winston's death. Then, to bind it all, you fail to appear at the reception after having tendered an acceptance. The case is very much against you, Mr. Guidoano, to say the least. What have you to say?"

Signor Guidoano's cheeks were drawn. The muscles in his face quivered slightly. A dull white color had supplanted his usual complexion. It was in a voice as quiet as it was firm, as somber as it was dignified, that he rejoined:

"The death of Mr. Winston comes as a surprise, Mr. Inspector, one which I genuinely regret, in spite of my seeming hatred of him. Believe me, sir, I had nothing whatsoever to do with his death."

A note of unsuspecting antagonism penetrated the inspector's voice:

"I'll admit, for the sake of argument, that you may be the victim of a remarkable series of coincidences. That is why I am not hasty in pointing a finger of accusal."

"Let me inform you of one thing," the Latinian said, his face brightening a trifle. "Mr. Winston and I, contrary to what most people suspect, were on the best of terms before his death. When I realized that Mr. Winston and I were again to meet after that regrettable incident in Italy, I sent him a personal note, asking his apology for what had happened then."

"You did that?" the inspector cried, half starting out of his seat in surprise. "Thunder! Then you could have had no motive for the crime!"

"None whatsoever," Guidoano responded. "The grudge I held against Mr. Winston has faded years ago. And if you doubt the existence of such a note I would advise a search of his home. I hardly think he destroyed it."

"I'll have that done," Garland said. "Now, if you can explain the other matters. To begin with, was it you who visited Mr. Winston this afternoon?"

"No, I have not seen him for six years."

"Then undoubtedly it was some one made up as you, who intended to throw suspicion in your way. Now, if you can prove that you were not at Winston's house at the time of the murder, if you can prove an alibi, there's nothing more to be said as to your innocence. Where were you between four and half-past six?"

The Italian singer did not answer on the instant. He arose, pacing the floor speculatively. No sound was audible in the room save the soft "swish" of his feet on the carpeted floor. Garland's eyes followed him expectantly. Presently the signor turned.

"Mr. Garland," he said with firmness, "I cannot answer your question."

Garland's steely eyes instantly narrowed. A look that told of a sharp turn in the road—that seemed to say, "Look out! There's danger ahead!"—was evident on his hard, brisk face.

"What's that?" he said sharply, rising swiftly. "Why, man, think what you're saying! If you had nothing to do with the crime, if you did not visit Winston between four and six-thirty, then where were you at that time?"

"I cannot tell you that," Guidoano persisted stolidly.

"Think, man, think of what you're saying!" Garland cried incredulously. "Where were you between four and six-thirty this afternoon? Answer me, or——"

But the Italian persisted in his silence.

"Then you admit your guilt?" the inspector snapped, bringing his hand instinctively to his hind-pocket. "All right, then. You needn't talk now, but you will at headquarters."

"I had no more to do with Mr. Winston's death than you had," Guidoano announced with a show of irritability.

"Then where were you?" Garland shouted impatiently.

"I cannot say."

"The devil you can't!" roared the inspector, losing his temper in a blaze of fury. "You didn't kill Winston, you weren't at his home, then where were you? There's something behind all this, Guidoano, that I'm determined to find out. I'm going to get a warrant, and after I serve it you'll——"

"You needn't trouble yourself." The Italian's voice was calm, collected. "I'll accompany you without a warrant. Here, Russell,

get me my hat and coat. And by the way, I may not be back for a day or two." Then, turning from the butler who had come into the room in answer to his call, he addressed Garland: "All right, Mr. Inspector. I am ready."

CHAPTER SIX

THE commissioner of police chose Johnny Lynne to solve the mystery of the Winston case. Johnny Lynne was a gray-eyed youth, quick and forceful, always smoking an inevitable cigarette. He had started at the bottom in police work, been promoted to a detective because of his keenness, and had been aided in climbing up the ladder by untangling several mystery-shrouded cases. He listened to the facts in the Winston affair with the utmost attention, and waited until the thousand-and-one details had been imparted to him by Inspector Garland. Then he sprang up and clicked his heels.

"All right, chief," was his parting shot. "I'll do my best."

From the corner of the street Lynne boarded a car going uptown and was rapidly whirled away to his destination. The trolley was crowded and he was forced to stand, but his thoughts remained unperturbed. Bit by bit he went over the most important particulars until his mind began to grow familiar with them. These were the main facts in the case:

A gentleman named Mr. Detmer expresses his fears that there may be trouble if Winston and the famous opera singer, Natio Guidoano, ever meet. He intends to give a reception, to which both these men are invited, but warns that he will keep them from meeting, whatever the means of doing so. Several hours before the reception Winston is murdered. Suspicion falls on Wyleman, the nephew and heir of Winston, and Guidoano. Wyleman proves a perfect alibi; seven clubmen swear to the fact that he was playing chess at the club from one in the afternoon to six. As for Guidoano, he does not appear at the reception, even after tendering an acceptance. Larkin, Winston's butler, states that some one greatly resembling the Italian singer visited Winston just previous to the murder. This stranger had handed the butler a card bearing the name Natio Guidoano. Furthermore, Guidoano refuses to impart where he had been at the time the murder had taken place. Lodged in prison, the Italian still persists in his silence.

The sonorous voice of the conductor shouting "Riverdrive!" interrupted Lynne's further contemplations. He left the car and rapidly approached the home of the late Coles Winston. A policeman, tall and rugged, stood lolling before the house of death. Lynne nodded familiarly to him, extracted the key of the front door from a pocket and entered the great wide hall.

The house was horribly still. Huge and gruesome shadows flickered like giant beings. Lynne brought his searchlight into play, stepping cautiously up the oak-balustraded stairway, which groaned dismally under his footsteps. On the middle floor he peered scrutinizingly into the room that had lately seen the shadow of death. There was no one there, no one on the floor, undoubtedly no one in the gray, gloomy house at all.

He searched the death-chamber diligently. Nothing, however, was to be found that he could call a clue, though his keen eyes pried into every nook and cranny in the room. Then he continued the ascent of the staircase. He had been informed, upon inquiring for the location of the servants' rooms, that they were situated on the third floor on the left of the corridor. The room that fronted the wide stairway he had been told was Greggson's. Through the crack of the door daylight filtered dimly, making it appear in the somber tenseness of the place as though a white streak had been chalked on the wall.

Here Johnny Lynne paused, listening for sounds of movement. He heard nothing and crossed to the door adjoining. This, he knew, opened into the room that had been occupied by Larkin, the butler. Again he strained his ever-listening ears to catch the slightest rustle, the slightest indication of the presence of a living being. All was still. The servants, it appeared, had deserted the building, evidently becoming alarmed after Winston's death by violence.

Turning the knob softly, he stepped into the chamber, his circle of light showing him his way clear.

He paused for a moment on the threshold, then switched on the light. It was a fairly large room, high-ceilinged and comfortably furnished. Larkin had evidently taken pride in its keeping, for it was spick and span, not a semblance of untidiness anywhere.

He crossed over to the modest-appearing bureau and began rummaging over its contents. Nothing of importance, however, was to be found there. He turned and regarded the squat-like table in the center of the room through meditative eyes. A drawer protruded the least fraction from its side. Johnny Lynne wrenched the drawer open, tore away the paper covering from the inside and allowed his eyes to canvass the limited recess.

A newspaper clipping, yellow and begrimed with age, met his gaze. He picked this up. A startled gasp, accompanied by a thrill that surged the entire length of his spine, escaped Lynne as he noticed the blood marks on it.

Here was a clue, at last!

Johnny examined the clipping carefully before reading it. The finger-prints on the paper were all too visible. It was evident that he, whoever it was that had had the clipping in his possession, had pressed the paper between his fingers so that the prints showed clearly.

With a tingling sensation the detective ran his eye over the clipping. He handled it delicately, for the paper had brittled with age:

NEW WILL OF STRICKLAND WINSTON FOUND!

NEW WILL IS UNEARTHED WHICH PROVES COLES WINSTON NOT SOLE HEIR.

London, Oct. 7 (*London Evening Mail*).—The will presented by Coles Winston, son of Strickland Winston, last February, which provided that the entire Winston estate be turned over to Coles Winston unconditionally, was yesterday proven not genuine when a new document, undoubtedly the last will of Mr. Winston, was unearthed. The new will splits the Winston estate into three equal portions, the heirs being Coles Winston, James Larkin Winston and Mrs. Frank Wharton Wyleman, his two sons and daughter. It will be remembered that both the second son, James, and the daughter, Thomasina, were expected by all to be disinherited, the former because of his wild journeys to Africa, which greatly displeased his father, and the daughter because of her marriage to an American sailor, Frank W. Wyleman. This accounts for the fact that the will presented by Coles Winston, making him the sole heir, was not disputed.

The discovery of the new will, dividing the estate equally, comes as a shock to all.

Both James L. Winston and Mrs. F. W. Wyleman are at present in the United States. They will be informed of the discovery of the new will, if they can be found, and unless they contend the right of Coles Winston as sole heir to the estate within a year it will remain in the hands of the present heir.

Twice Lynne read the clipping; then once again, more slowly. At the fourth reading his eyes paused at the name James Larkin Winston. He pronounced the name aloud, his voice emphatic in its slowness. James—Larkin — Winston. Yes, that was it — Larkin! How unobserving of him not to have noticed the connection before.

A great light suddenly flooded the actively consolate mind of Johnny Lynne. Innumerable jumbled thoughts vanished before the dawn of trepid realization. James Larkin Winston—Larkin! Why, they were one and the same! Undoubtedly. Wasn't this Larkin's room? And in it was found a yellowish clipping relating to an apparently insignificant affair. Who but one vitally interested in the matter would keep the clipping in his possession? And the names—what proof did he have that Larkin's last name was not Winston? What was Larkin's full name, anyhow? The coincidence was not merely a matter to be passed over without rumination.

And the blood marks! Great Scott! Here was the clue that was flinging the torch of light into the darkness of the Winston mystery. Whose marks were they? Whose blood had it been? If the blood was that of the murdered man, if the finger-prints were those of the butler, then what?

Lynne turned, plunged the room into im-

penetrable darkness and switched on his searchlight. In the space of a minute he was down the creaking staircase and out into the clean yet sprawling thoroughfare. At the corner he hailed a taxi, informed the chauffeur tersely, "Headquarters police — Buchnell street," and leaned back restlessly in the seat.

CHAPTER SEVEN

INSPECTOR GARLAND, immersed in a perplexing mass of police papers, looked up inquiringly as Lynne entered. He recognized the other's greeting by his always-curt nod and watched the subordinate drop lightly into the seat beside him. Then he said:

"Something's up, I can see that by your face, Johnny. What is it?"

"I've discovered a clue that puts an entirely new aspect on the case," Lynne averred eagerly. He bent forward and brought his fist forcefully into the palm of his other hand. "It's just one of those apparently minor things," he continued, "that turn you in the right direction. Unless I'm greatly mistaken, it proves that the person who slew Winston knew him—what we call an insider."

"You're not very often greatly mistaken," Garland complimented. "Now, what is this clue?"

Lynne's hand went to his pocket and he produced on the instant the clipping that he had discovered in Larkin's deserted chamber. This he handed to the inspector. Garland's eyes clouded; a perplexed, mildly perturbed air crept into his strong face as he read the article. Then he tossed the clipping on his desk. For a time he said not a word, but looked off into space unseeingly, thinkingly. Slowly his face retracted. Lingering for a moment, the frown of bewilderment faded before an appreciative grin as broad as an arena.

"Good enough!" he exclaimed, half rising in his seat and dropping back into it heavily. "I see it all now. Larkin — James Larkin Winston! If they're not one and the same, then Old Dame Fate is one grand little teaser. This is no ordinary clue, Johnny boy. Where'd you find it?"

"In Larkin's room," Lynne disclosed. It was evident that his superior's jovial attitude toward this new discovery pleased him not a little. "Found it in the drawer of the table. This Larkin must have left it there, or maybe some one else did. The finger-prints show——"

"We'll soon find out who they belong to," Garland interrupted. He turned to a white button on the side and jabbed his finger against it. When the clerk had entered in response to the ringing, he inquired brusquely:

"Is Kimmerley in yet?"

The clerk nodded an affirmation.

"Send him up," Garland instructed. "Tell him not to linger on the way, either."

The clerk disappeared; presently the door opened, admitting a heavy-set, lantern-jawed individual, whose blue eyes moved restlessly in their sockets. Kimmerley was one of the men who had accompanied Garland to the house of death on the day of the murder, and who had afterwards proven Wyleman's alibi to be true. His face showed his interest as he saluted the official and waited expectantly.

The inspector leveled his finger.

"I want you, Kimmerley," he said, "to obtain the finger-prints of every one who had, either domestically or otherwise, to do with Winston, deceased. You can begin with Larkin, the butler; then get Guidoano's, who's in the pen, and so on down the line. Johnny Lynne here will accompany you; after you've massed the prints hand them over to him. He'll know what to do with them, all right, all right," Garland added confidentially. "If this case doesn't come to a close in a very short time then I miss my guess."

Johnny Lynne arose, following Kimmerley to the door. Inspector Garland watched the door close peremptorily behind the pair, then allowed his attention to return to his work.

Half an hour later a clamorous-looking messenger boy entered Inspector Garland's office. In his hand was a telegram; after the clerk had signed he surrendered it and departed. The clerk then entered Garland's private office and gave the telegram to him. Leaning back resignedly in his chair, the inspector tore the envelope open and allowed his eyes to roam over its contents.

It was marked Los Angeles, California, and for a telegram was rather long. As Garland read, a look of mildly bizarre, frowning perplexity shrouded his brow. Then suddenly his eyes opened wide with amazement. Leaping up, his features hardly exquisite, his teeth set sternly, his eyes glaring, he finished reading the telegram. Impassiveness suddenly came over him and he read it a second time, a bit more coolly. Then he tossed it on his desk. His hands went to his head. He leaned back quickly in his chair, aggressively churlish.

"Whew!" he muttered dazedly. "I was more inclined to forget all about Lynne's clipping and give a thought to Guidoano's absence of alibi, but now——"

For what he had read was the following:

INSPECTOR OF POLICE GARLAND, New York.

Natio Guidoano is innocent of the crime for which he is imprisoned. I can prove it. I am his wife, formerly Alicia Jensen, of the Globe Motion Picture Company. We were married secretly the night of the death of Mr. Winston. Would have telegraphed sooner, but word of my husband's imprisonment just drifted to the Coast. Evidently refuses to impart his whereabouts at the time of the murder because of his promise to me to keep the marriage secret. I cannot allow him to suffer in the meantime, however, whatever the unwelcome notoriety. Rev. James L. Watson, of Poughkeepsie, who married us, and his entire household, will swear to the alibi. You are blundering in the wrong direction. I will be in New York immediately to clear up this disgraceful matter.

(Signed) MRS. NATIO GUIDOANO.

CHAPTER EIGHT

NIGHT was rapidly wearing on. The stars, twinkling uncertainly in a faultless sky, at length settled and shone steadily. A half-moon had risen; there was a brisk wind stirring in its wake. In some parts of the city it was positively cold, raw, sufficiently so to warrant the use of extra clothing apparel. Rather an abrupt change from the torridness of the day.

It was in the vicinity of one of these cool sections that Johnny Lynne, his finger-print mission with Kimmerley having been consummated, bade good-by to that individual and swung rapidly in the direction of the Winston residence. It was time he were home; his chase about town had tired him, but he had no thought of discontinuing the day's work. There was more to be done, he knew. A ruddiness in his cheeks and the sparkling in his eyes hinted that he had thus far been successful. He had collected the finger-prints, had found that they corresponded exactly to the bloody ones on the clipping. So far, so good.

He must proceed slowly, however. His knowledge of the finger-print's identity did not necessarily indicate that he had solved the mystery of the killing of Coles Winston. He could not point his finger unfalteringly, unwaveringly, and say positively, "This man is the murderer! I can prove it!" He might have his suspicions, he might personally regard some one through eyes of mistrust, but if that person protested his innocence, then that was all there was to it. Proof! He must have proof!

So he was now going to visit the place of the tragedy. He was in search of proof. Lynne knew that the guilty party, after having been asked for his finger-prints, would instantly believe himself suspected. Then if he had owned the clipping he would remember it in conjunction and hurry over to the Winston house to see if it had been confiscated, and recover it, if not. In that way he would be trapped!

It was an excellent plan, worthy of being tried.

As he neared his destination he suddenly remembered that he had left the key to the Winston residence with the inspector. He paused in his tracks, puzzled for the moment. But he did not turn back. As long as there were other entrances to be effected the house was not invincible. He quickened his pace; soon the Winston house sprang out of the night's blackness to meet him.

He found his way to the lattice iron gateway situated in the rear of the massive home.

This, easily enough, he scaled. Here in the open he did not dare use his electric torch for fear of detection. So, depending on his sense of touch, he felt his way through the darkness to the kitchen window. When his hands found it, he felt his heart, imperturbable as it was, take on extra pressure immediately. For the window was open a good eighteen inches from the bottom!

Some one was in the house!

Lynne did not doubt it for a moment. In truth, it was what he had half expected. He was positive it was not the police, for they could have easily entered the house by using the key to the front door. It was either the murderer, an accomplice in the crime, or a housekeeper. Lynne very much doubted that it was the latter.

He swung his leg over the sill and climbed in. Oppressive silence reigned in the house. The half-moon sent a lurid light that threw a dull glow over the kitchen. Night shadows flickered dismally. Like a phantom, aided by his flash, he glided through the dining-room into the hall. His light searched every corner and nook in the space near the wide stairway.

He began the ascent. On the second floor he peered into the chamber in which Winston had met his death. Not a sound; no alien note to intrude upon the oppressive silence. He entered and closed the door behind him. And as he did so he felt the torch knocked forcefully from his hand and found himself reeling from a blow in the small of his back.

He had half expected something of the sort when he had turned his back, unthinkingly, to close the door. So he was not caught wholly unawares. Yet a queer confusion of thoughts assailed him. Like a drowning man he thought of Garland, Larkin, Guidoano, Kimmerley, all in rapid, split-second intervals. His mouth went dry. He trembled as he felt himself going down.

Again something struck him, this time brutally in the face. He felt his throat gripped with fingers of steel. Stunned by the ferociousness of the attack, weakening fast, his shut-off breath gurgling painingly in his throat, he reached for the pistol in his back pocket. His fingers gripped it; its frigid smoothness sent courageous passion through his every fibre. With the strength of anger his free hand tore at the coarse hands that threatened his life. Then, collecting his drowning mentality, he clenched his hand and buried it in yielding flesh.

To his surprise, for he felt that there was little power behind the blow, his throat was released. His finger pressed on the trigger: he heard a sickening grunt. A shadowy figure grazed his clothing; a dull thud sounded at his feet.

He drew himself wearily together, slumping against a nearby object, apparently the table, for support. His hand went to his throat caressingly. He was breathing hard; his breath came short and hot. He staggered to the wall, searching for the button that would send light into the room. He could hear unrhythmic gasping that was not his own. The sound was uncanny.

His hands found the button; light flooded the room.

Sprawled on the floor, almost directly on the spot where Coles Winston had lain several days before, was a man, his face downward, breathing heavily.

Johnny Lynne looked blinkingly at him for a time. His mind was still in a haze. He walked totteringly over to the wounded man, pulled at his coat and turned him over. The face that met his gaze was ugly, unpropitious. A sudden chill went up and down the spine of the detective as he realized the identity of the other.

The man was Larkin!—Larkin, Winston's butler!

Johnny Lynne placed the still smoking pistol on the table. He turned, regarding the fallen man dazedly, with an amazed expression. The guttural breathing of the other jarred upon his ear. He stooped and hauled the body into a nearby chair, using every ounce of his strength. The change of place seemed to affect the wounded man, for he stirred restlessly. His eyes opened. They looked at Lynne strangely, tranquilly.

There was a short, awkward silence.

Presently Larkin brought his hand to his forehead. He looked at it—at the blood on his hand. He tried to rise, but fell back with a short, grating laugh

"It's—it's only a flesh wound," he murmured. "It doesn't pain much. A little more and—and I—I'd have been dead. I—I'm in luck. I thought——" He paused, glancing at the pistol on the table.

"What are you doing here?" Lynne asked, rising. His voice did not sound as harsh as he had intended it. The other's condition was to be pitied. "What are you looking for in this house? And why did you attack me?"

"I came to get something that concerns myself only." Larkin's eyes flashed. "As for my attacking you, I—I thought you were a burglar. I was mistaken. You're the officer who came around to get my finger-prints—you and another man?"

"Yes," said Lynne briefly. He felt strangely subdued. "Your wound—it ought to be fixed a bit. I'll——"

Larkin waved him aside.

"I told you it's only a flesh wound. The bullet must have glanced off my face."

"Very well," said Lynne. He neared the chair of the other. "In that case, there's no danger." He leveled a finger that seemed huge in its portentous significance. "Now you tell me what you are doing here?"

"I've as much right here as any one, haven't I?" Larkin said evasively.

"That's not answering my question." The detective extracted the clipping from his pocket. "You came to get this, didn't you?"

Larkin pulled himself up from the chair. His whole frame trembled. He stared at the yellow-aged clipping with bulging eyes. Several times he started to speak, but always closed his mouth with a snap.

Lynne's voice became firm. "You seem to recognize this," he said. "Is it yours?"

Larkin wet his lips.

"Larkin," said the detective, leveling his forefinger, "I'm going to forego this tomfoolery. I know who you are. You're James Larkin Winston, the brother of Coles Winston. You can't deny it. I know. This clipping, found in your room, proves it and hints that you may have had a motive for killing your brother. Why did you pose as his butler? And why are you here now? Because you feared that you are suspected. Only the guilty ones are conscientious. Larkin, did you kill your brother?"

The former servant of Coles Winston had fallen back in his seat. Rabid fear shone in his eyes. Crimson had deepened in his pale cheeks. He was quivering perceptibly; his breath was short and quick.

Suddenly he jumped from his chair.

"No, no! God, no! I didn't kill him," he averred with savage solemnity. "Who said I did? You lie, man! What is that piece of paper? I don't know what you're talking about. Who said my name is James Larkin Winston? Who said I'm Winston's brother? That's a lie, you devil! I—I'm——"

His voice broke into a trembling whine; he dropped back into the seat, exhausted.

Lynne looked at him grimly. He felt himself warming up to the task in spite of the pity in his heart.

"You can't deny it," he said loudly. "This clipping proves everything. You know it! First of all, why are you here to-night? Sure you killed him. Why, man? Why did you murder your brother?"

"I didn't!" Larkin shrieked. Blue veins stood out on his forehead.

"You killed Coles Winston," Lynne repeated dispassionately. "Why?"

"No, No!" Larkin shouted. "I—I—" His voice droned in his throat, lingered, then softened to a whimper. Tears suddenly started to his eyes. His knees shook and sagged slowly; he fell inanely to the floor.

"God in heaven!" he moaned in pitiably hoarse tones. "Help me! Yes, I killed my brother—slew him in cold blood. He was a demon. He tortured me, by deeds and words. I hated him. God, how I hated that man! He was my brother, yes, but he looked down upon me, much as a master would upon a slave. I was but praying to the Lord to give me a chance to avenge my restless soul. Then opportunity came.

"You have read that clipping. You have guessed that I am James Larkin Winston, the man who was cheated out of his inheritance by his worthless brother. You can guess how I felt at the time I learned that the will he presented was not genuine. I had sailed for Africa soon after being misled in believing myself disinherited. By the time I had returned to England and gotten ready for the legal struggle a year was up and I was in-

formed that I could do nothing to regain my just inheritance.

"I came to America, only to become a household servant. I was thoroughly dejected. After sixteen years of that life I came into New York City for the first time and soon learned that my brother was living here in peace and plenty. I was bitter. I visited him, but he would do nothing for me. He gave me the position as butler in his home upon condition that I was not to reveal my identity. Imagine such a brother!

"I quarreled repeatedly with him over the question of money. Day after day my hate grew. Then Mr. Detmer came to see me. He said that he would pay me handsomely if I succeeded in keeping my brother in the house the entire night, using force if necessary. There was going to be a reception, he said, and if Mr. Winston was present it meant trouble. Would I help him out in this matter and be justly rewarded? I agreed. The plan as Mr. Detmer outlined it was as follows: I was to enter Winston's room at about four, quarrel with him, pull the pistol which Detmer had supplied me with and forced the man to stay in the room until about eleven. It was a difficult task, Detmer said, but he would pay me the sum of five hundred dollars if I succeeded. It meant, Detmer said, the possible saving of a man's life. Little did he know of my relation to Winston!

"My brother had that day given the servants a holiday, but I stayed in. At four-thirty I went into his room without so much as knocking and quietly asked him to raise my meager salary. He refused angrily, and when I persisted he threw a book at me. The occurrence jarred upon me, but I did nothing but ask him for a raise in salary a third time. He arose now, walked over to me and knocked me down.

"I saw red that moment. All my hate welled up within me. Who was he to strike me when I asked him for a fraction of my money. For was it not my money? I pulled my pistol and pointed it at him. He dared me to shoot, laughingly. I pulled the trigger and he fell.

"I bent down beside him. When I visited my room I took out the clipping you have there and in that way my fingers were impressed on it."

He paused abruptly; a look of fatigue came over him. He was sobbing now, very softly. At that precise moment Lynne pitied him—was sorry for him as he had never been sorry for any one before. Truly, this man before him, crouching and weeping and trembling at his feet, was but a victim of circumstances. He made a movement to step forward and lift the other from the floor, but Larkin drew up his hand in protest.

"One thing more and I am through. I was at first not concerned with what I had done, but after a time, alone in that great house with a dead man for sole companion, the momentousness of it bore down upon me. Then I remembered something: Mr. Detmer, I knew, would guess what had happened after he had become acquainted with the news of my brother's death and would tell what he knew to the police. Fear caused me to visit Mr. Detmer, and I laid the whole story before him, even showing him the clipping you have there. With tears in my eyes I begged of him not to give me away, and in lieu of the circumstances he reluctantly promised."

He arose slowly. His eyes were dry now, their gray solemnity shone forth in contrast to the red about them. Then he continued:

"That is all. I know this confession will create a newspaper sensation. I know that I shall be given very unpleasant notoriety. I know that at the trial I shall be shunned and condemned. Once, in England, I stood in a jeering court. It is humiliation not to be endured again."

With a swift movement he turned his back on the detective. The pistol whose bullet had grazed his cheek lay on the table; before Lynne could move it flashed from Larkin's sleeve. The light glinted on the weapon as he pointed it to his temple. He took one dazed, uncertain step; his fingers clutched wildly in the air as he fell.

For an instant the amazed Lynne did not move. Then he stooped beside the other and laid his ear against his chest. He shook his head slowly. Rising, he glanced about the room and his gaze fell upon the telephone on a small table in the corner. He approached it and lifted the receiver.

"Hello!" he called. "Give me police headquarters, please."

Garments Worn By Thieves

"OF all the various accessories which the ingenious pickpocket, shop sneak or general purloiner of other people's property adopts for the furtherance of his evil ends, the cape coat is perhaps the most popular and successful, and I may tell you I never see a man clad in one of them loitering in a crowd or inspecting the things which I am sometimes told off to guard without keeping a sharp eye upon him," declared a detective during a recent brief chat.

"Scores of purses, ofttimes well filled with cash and notes, change owners every season, under the mask of the voluminous cape coat.

"A dodge that has been worked almost to death by the light-fingered fraternity is to wear a cape coat and a false arm, with neatly made and well-gloved hand in addition, so that while apparently both hands are in full view, the operator has in reality one of them free for exploring the pockets of his neighbors.

"This is a very favorite device with the numerous rogues who make a special study of pocket picking in trolleys and subways.

"Some years ago the police had all their work cut out to capture a daring scoundrel who worked 'the car fake,' clad though you may hardly believe it in the garb of a priest.

"On his knees he invariably carried a hymn or prayer book, over which he folded his hands, one of which was in reality a 'dummy,' and while this innocent-looking limb was motionless on his lap, the real fingers of his right hand were busy exploring the pockets of his nearest fellow passenger, their movements being hidden by the short black coat which he invariably wore.

"Another artful article of personal attire is the long cloth waterproof so often adopted by female shop-sneaks, and I have seen specimens of these lined inside from top to bottom with neat pockets, or perhaps having only two large ones, one on each side, into which, as soon as an article has been smuggled from off the counter, it is easily and readily dropped.

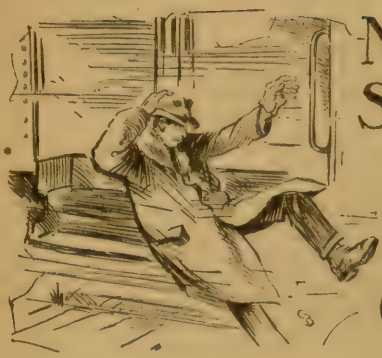
"A dolman with wide sleeves also once came under my notice, these sleeves being simply ingeniously constructed receptacles, stiffened with whalebone for the purpose of accidentally sweeping off any small article that could be dragged into them.

"The practive of carrying capacious wraps or top-coats on the arm is also a favorite one with 'chain-snatchers,' who, pushing up against their victim in some crowded street or railway station, are able to snip through the gold or silver links with their powerful metal nippers, and lift out the watch and severed chain unobserved.

"Reverting again to the practices of the shop-sneak, the unrolled umbrella is often employed as a temporary repository for small articles abstracted from the shelves or counters, and I have even known a case where the turned-up trouser legs were used as a means of secreting stolen goods. The thief in question frequenting the jewelry departments of large stores and kindred establishments would ask to look at some good gold studs, one or two of which he invariably managed to palm, and then quickly convey them to the turned-up ends of his nether garments, made some excuse for not purchasing, and shuffled carefully away with his prize.

"A capacious muff, too, is very frequently part of the equipment of female thieves who attend the Winter sales, and half a dozen handkerchiefs, four pairs of gloves, and two neckties I have myself seen emptied from an innocent-looking sealskin muff worn by as demure-looking a young woman as you'd see anywhere among the Quakers."

It takes a pretty sharp detective to get onto the [illegible]ves that these crooks are constantly inven[illegible] the purpose of stealing.



NAILING THE SUPER-SLEUTH

by

Hamilton Craigie

and

George J. Southwick

CHAPTER ONE

THE somewhat stout young man in the ultra-fashionable beaver and the super-tailored ragland of dove-gray glanced sidewise at his companion, clearing his throat. Finally:

"Sharp weather we're having," he remarked, tracing one stubby finger across the frost-rimmed window.

"It sure is," answered the cadaverous individual with the roving eye and the tight-lipped mouth, biting his words off short. "She hit twenty below this morning."

"Looks like we're in for a mighty hard winter," went on the stout young man with remarkable originality, his shoe-button eyes blinking in the glare from the open window.

"It sure does," came from his seatmate in the crowded smoker, in a tone that might have been hearty if it had not had in it an undercurrent of steel. Now his eye glinted upon the stout young man, and away.

"Live down this way?" he remarked casually, his glance again for a split second observing his companion in a quick, flashing appraisal.

"Er—no," replied the stout young man. "Er—miles from here. As a matter of fact, I'm a stranger in these parts, sir—from Baldwinville, you know."

"Yes—yes, of course," assented the spare individual with a trace of sudden heartiness. "In business there?"

The stout young man exhibited a trace of importance.

"Yes, and everywhere else for that matter," he proclaimed.

The cadaverous individual glanced once over his shoulder. He spoke from the corner of his mouth:

"Well, now, Mister—Mister—— I don't get you. You mean?"

The stout young man might have strutted had he been on his feet; at any rate his resemblance to a pouter pigeon left nothing to be desired.

"Well, I don't mind telling you—confidentially, of course—I'm a detective. And—and just now I'm on a sort of vacation, as you might say." His accompanying smirk was frankly self-conscious.

"Well, well!" The lean man's tone indicated genuine surprise. "I never would have guessed it, Mister—Mister——"

"That," explained the stout young man impressively, with a cryptic look, "is the art of concealing one's identity. It would never do for me to go around proclaiming to all the

world that I am a sleuth—an apprehender of criminals, you know."

"Quite right, sir," agreed the other, soberly. "It would not; it would be nothing short of criminal, if you ask me. How long, may I inquire, if it's all the same, have you been on the—ah—force?"

The stout young man hesitated, his round, pink countenance a shade rounder and pinker than before.

"Well," he made answer, "I'm not exactly on the force," he admitted slowly. "I'm what is known as a private operator, graduate of one of the biggest and best correspondence schools of criminology in the country: the Lysander Pendleton Institute; it's internationally famous. Here's my card."

He produced a neat leather case from which he extracted a card, passing it to his companion.

"Ah," observed the recipient, musingly, fingering the engraved letters. "Mr. William Harrison Emsworth. A fine old name."

"And yours?" queried the stout young man bluntly. For an interval there was a little silence. Then:

"Why—ah—I—ah—my name is Dalrymple—J. Hartley Dalrymple, sir, at your service. I am a member of the roving brotherhood, a knight of the grip; in other words a commercial traveler, if you care to know. Of course," he continued with a deprecatory gesture, "I have nothing to sell you, and I cannot at present throw any business your way, but I may have use for your card later on, you never can tell. So I'll retain it, sir, if you've no objections."

"Keep it, and welcome," said Mr. Emsworth heartily. "I've plenty where that came from. Why——"

He paused abruptly, his hand in air. A railway news-butcher was coming down the aisle, proclaiming to all and sundry: "Glora-dora see-gars, gents—and cigarettes."

Mr. J. Hartley Dalrymple lifted an imperious finger.

"Boy," he intoned solemnly, "have you any good cigars?"

In the by-play which followed, the friendly rivalry as to who should pay, Mr. Emsworth singularly enough won out. But as they prepared to light up Mr. Dalrymple, his hand in his pocket, brought forth a box of lucifers with a twisted grin.

"My good friend," he said, "I have just discovered that I could not have purchased these very excellent cigars without the tender of a large bill. Upon my word, I haven't a thing smaller than a saw—a twenty, I mean," he ended hastily.

J. Hartley Dalrymple had been about to say "Sawbuck," but had checked the word in utterance. Perhaps he wished to impress his newfound acquaintance. But Mr. Emsworth had not noticed.

"It often happens that way when a fellow's in a hurry," observed Mr. Emsworth, leaning back placidly in his seat. "But you've no cause for worry as long as you have a sufficient number of — ah — 'sawbucks,' I believe they're called, in your pocket."

"Sort of unhandy, though," replied J. Hartley Dalrymple. His too close-set eyes glowed a sudden gray-green like a cat's, a mere fugitive glimmer, like the sun on water. "Now, at the town I'm headed for," he continued, "I'll probably have to take a jitney, and it's almost a certainty that the chap I'll hire won't be able to make change."

For a fleeting instant Mr. Emsworth's shade. There was a perceptible pause for an instant.

"Perhaps I can help you out," volunteered Mr. Emsworth slowly. "I have a bunch of small bills and a lot of chicken-feed with me. How about four fives?"

"Fine!" ejaculated J. Hartley Dalrymple. "That's mighty good of you, Mr. Emsworth. I'm much indebted to you."

"Not at all—not at all!" disclaimed the stout young man airily. "Produce your twenty."

A fair exchange is no robbery, so runs the ancient saw. Mr. Dalrymple produced his twenty, receiving in exchange four five-dollar bills. What could be fairer? They smoked and chatted for an interval to an obligato of clicking rails and the murmurous long roar of the train's passage through the crisp, golden afternoon. But all things have an end, good things included, of necessity. There came a raucous bellow of

"Jenkintown! Jenkintown! All change f'r

Squeedunk, Podunk, Skowhegan, Piankatank an' Yaphank. All change!"

At least that is the way it sounded. But with the first echo of that disturbing chant Dalyrmple was on his feet.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed. "I—I almost forgot! Pleasant company—what? I'm getting off here, old man; but I'm mighty glad to have met you, I am, for a fact. You'll hear from me probably at an early date. Well, good-by and good luck!"

Dalrymple was passing down the aisle. At that moment Emsworth felt rather than saw a shadow rise out of the aisle behind—a bulky shadow with a red face and an aggressive, close-cropped mustache. He wore a detective's gold badge. With an odd expression on his cherubic countenance, Emsworth watched, slumping in his seat, as the officer, black slouch hat pulled low over his forehead, overtook Dalrymple at the door.

"Why, if it ain't *Mister* Ferris!" said the detective.

Emsworth caught the whispered words. For an instant the tableau held: the big man with his hand upon Dalrymple's shoulder, forward-thrusting jaw within an inch of the latter's face. From where Emsworth sat he could not see how it was done, but even as he looked his erstwhile companion, reaching in his pocket, handed the tall man a banknote at which Emsworth caught the muttered ejaculation:

"Is that so? You are not Ferris? Well, I—I'll be teetotally flabbergasted! I beg your pardon, sir. I—I thought——"

Emsworth half rose in his seat as Dalrymple, without a backward glance, sprang from the train. The big man was coming back, his face a study in contrasting emotions. Emsworth, crouching in his seat, heard and saw—heard a low-voiced oath; saw, for a brief fleeting instant, the small, gold five-pointed star at the corner of the red-faced man's vest.

As the big man passed, Emsworth half rose in his seat, in his face the look of a man who meditates flight, or combat, or both. Or so it seemed. On a sudden it seemed that he would speak. Then, as the train gathered headway, he made a sudden sally, his coat-tails whipped round the door, even as the big man with the paint-brush mustache turned his head. Then he jumped from the train.

Alone on the station platform (Dalyrmple had long since disappeared) William Harrison Emsworth watched the long train as it roared westward its diminishing-way. And perhaps he may have been thinking of a certain jibing remark directed at him on an occasion not so very remote:

"Which would you prefer: to be a bigger fool than you seem, or to seem a bigger fool than you be?"

And perhaps he did not derive a very great measure of comfort from the answer, which was the same for both questions, whichever the choice:

"You couldn't!"

And just then a heavy hand came down on his shoulder and a voice cried: "I've got ye, by gum!"

CHAPTER TWO

J. HARTLEY DALRYMPLE, D. C., alias the Crokinole Kid, the Philadelphia Flash, and various other less obvious appellations, stalked out of Eisenstein's New York Store with a frozen dignity which, when he had gone clear to the street, melted in an abrupt rate of speed which took him to the corner of the avenue and around it in about ten seconds from a standing start.

In the old, unregenerate days, when the clink of the cold bottle was heard in the land, merged with the plaintive voice of the sucker, it had been said of J. Hartley that he had learned his monte from Montezuma, achieving his titles from the habitat of his avocation, his degree of "D. C." from his practice as Doctor of Confidence. It had been a long time now since he had demonstrated the affinity of peas for shells; he had been compelled to take his pickings from whatever source presented itself, as witness the spurious twenty which he had palmed off on William Harrison Emsworth.

But J. Hartley Dalrymple had been due for an unpleasant surprise and he had gotten it.

It was a snapping cold day, but once around that protecting corner, J. Hartley's forehead, beneath its fashionable Stetson, showed damp with sweat. His nonchalance for once in abeyance, J. Hartley, his harried gaze questing about him all ways at once, espied the swing-doors of a denatured thirst emporium just at hand. Presently the hunt would be up, and it would be "Yoicks!" and "Tally-ho!" for the fox who fled, and the devil take the hindmost.

J. Hartley, swinging to the rightabout, plunged into the gloom of the café, and presently, as he sat, a tall glass of near-Nepenthe before him, his hat bestowed carefully out of sight, he heard the roar and rattle of the chase, rising from the street without in a bellowing crescendo:

"He went this way!" "No—down-street, I tell ye!" "Catch the slick, durn his smooth hide!"

It was passing, going on. J. Hartley Dalrymple heaved a deep, inward suspiration of relief when the swing-doors burst inward violently and framed in the opening there thrust a lean, whiskered visage, like a peering Pan.

This personage, shading his eyes with his hand, addressed the servitor in white behind the made-over bar:

"Hey, Johnnie! See anything uv a city slick? Tall feller, white fedory hat, leetle black mustache? He's wanted f'r tryin' t' pass a counter-feet five-dollar bill on Jake Eisenstein."

The "city slick" held his breath, a wry smile touching his stiff lips at the remembrance of that incredible faux pas. Well, a cherubic countenance is not always an earnest of right dealing. But that make-up of William Harrison Emsworth's was sure the goods, and no mistake! It would have fooled anybody. That it had been a fair shake J. Hartley Dalrymple had not even considered. "The cheap crook!" he was reflecting. "The piking guy Emsworth! Run a whizer on me, huh?" For J. Hartley had just twenty dollars' worth of "queer" fives for his twenty-dollar bill.

Now he held his breath, every consideration but that of his pressing need wiped from his consciousness. "Johnnie" was slow in answering. He hemmed, he hawed, he "reckoned"; finally he said, with an aggravating slow drawl:

"Well, now, Lige, there ain't been nobuddy the likes of whut ye tell me come in yere, by gravy—nossir!"

The whiskered face seemed to be gazing directly at J. Hartley Dalrymple; then, abruptly, it was gone. J. Hartley drew a deep, hissing breath. The denatured bartender had not saved him through any sudden accession of pity or of guile. The fact was that it was not actually J. Hartley Dalrymple who sat there, or rather it was himself, minus that fetching mustache, which, with a deft movement, he had removed on entering. Besides this, Johnnie had never seen that hat, nor the "plumpers" which the doctor of confidence had, with a lightning movement, inserted within his lean cheeks.

A long minute he sat, chin on his cupped palm; then, rising, paid his check, giving the dispenser look for look with an admirable steadiness. But there was no recognition in the dull eyes of the man who faced him.

J. Hartley walked forth, and this time he was wearing a shapeless brown nondescript which he had produced from a capacious pocket. The next town, Binks Corners, was but three miles away. He would make it within the hour; after that—well, the Big Town would not see him any too soon. And that was a "moral."

Once clear of the town and the rest would be easy. J. Hartley quickened his pace the merest shade; it would not do to suggest even the appearance of haste; out of the tail of his eye he glimpsed the flash of brass buttons, a blue uniform—the looming figure of a constable, majestic guardian of the law.

J. Hartley Dalrymple passed that constable humming a little tune. He was safe, safe! Just let him make his getaway and that was all he wanted. And it was not much to ask, but it was too much to receive. Fate, providence, a perverse destiny at that moment intervened. A heavy hand on his shoulder swung him to the rightabout.

"This — yours?" came a voice, harsh, instinctive with suspicion and something more.

J. Hartley could only stare—stare dumbly at the white fedora dangling from the massive digits of the constable. Then he found his voice.

"Why, yes, officer; I—I must have dropped it."

For a split second all his wit, his nerve, his assurance seemed to ooze out of his finger-tips, then all at once returned in a flood of glib and easy speech, the "patter" of a clever crook armed at all points save in the vital one of the whip-hand.

But to no avail. "Looks like you're that there city slick we've been a-lookin' fer," came the heavy tones. "March now, and"—with a metropolitan affectation — "tell your story walkin'."

J. Hartley walked. There was nothing else to do. But all the time his busy brain schemed ways of escape. Twice he had almost started, straining at his figurative leash, but a side-glance at his captor restrained the impulse to go away from there.

And then abruptly it came to him, fool that he had not thought of it! And it would work, he was certain of that. It must work, it had to!

By this time the two—officer and captive—had acquired a sizable retinue; from the fringes of the crowd voices began to mutter and then to rise in menacing shouts, like a ripple, an eddy; a tension grew, fine-drawn, like a thin wire.

A building loomed before them; J. Hartley knew, without looking at it, that it was the calaboose, jail, courthouse and all the rest. In a way he was glad that they were there; he had never liked crowds, and now he liked them less than ever. But it was with a return to his assured manner that in obedience to the none too gentle pressure of the constable's ham-like hand he entered the dingy "office," the presiding genius of which surveyed him with the sleepy-lidded, morose stare of an elderly falcon.

Chief of Police Elijah Bascom raised his head, with its goatish tuft of whisker. His eyes glowed lambent, like a cat's.

"Ha—the slick!" he said, but his tone was lifeless, dull.

But there was a quality in that voice to give pause to a hardier spirit than was J. Hartley Dalrymple's. It smacked of dungeons, of bread and water, and tales were not wanting of the manner in which metropolitan gentlemen of fortune had been received in similar circumstances.

"It's all a mistake, chief," he said with just the proper shading of deference. "And I can prove it."

Fumbling a moment in his pocket, he produced a square of pasteboard, placing it upon the table with an air.

"My card, sir," he declared with dignity.

Chief Bascom held it to the light, squinted at it, turned it around and back, placing it finally on the battered table which did duty as a desk.

"Harrumph!" he said. "Mr. William Harrison Emsworth, hey?" His tone lightened. Then as suddenly it grew stern:

"You amachure detekatufs—they shouldn't let you run without a halter, by cracky!" he exclaimed in a virtuous indignation. "No, by time, they shouldn't, I swan to man!"

For a little man the chief's voice came with an astonishing rumble; its booming filled the room. But J. Hartley, speechless with gratification and wonder, could only nod dumbly. After all, he had been none too sure in what manner his story would be received, but plainly the chief was taking him at face value. It wasn't often that Chief Bascom was favored with an opportunity to crow over the Big Town—perhaps this may have had something to do with it—and this time he spread himself:

"Lysander Pendleton Institution!" he sniffed. "Graduate, hey? What ye need, boy, is a graduate nurse. Heh—heh—heh! And them whiskers! Say, son, what'd ye think——" The room rang with his cachinnation.

And then, as suddenly, J. Hartley had another inspiration.

"Well, chief," he said humbly, "I may be an amateur all right enough, but it was a sure-enough crook that gave me the privilege of meeting you. I—I'll admit I haven't had a great deal of experience," he continued, falteringly, "but how was I to know? The man I speak of—it was he who palmed off on me four counterfeit five-dollar bills for my twenty. And—and that's about all I had, chief." he ended on a low note.

"And—and I can describe him to you, chief. I'm good at descriptions," he continued with an apologetic laugh. "He's young, not more than twenty-five; stout, with a round, pink-

ish face, and he was wearing—let me see—a brown beaver fedora and one of those fancy raglans — overcoats, you know. I tell you, chief, he's a slick one, he is, for a fact. And if I were you I'd keep an eye out for him. Now, he calls himself J. Hartley Dalrymple."

The chief nodded like a mechanical mandarin.

"Shouldn't wonder if I'd hev t' keep an eye peeled f'r this jasperino. Well, so long, young feller. See you again some time, like as not."

The chief turned to some papers on his desk. J. Hartley Dalrymple stood not upon the order of his going, but went away from there with the speed clutch thrown into high. And as he went down the moth-eaten stairs the words of an old refrain hummed through his head:

"Good-by! Good luck! God bless you!
Is all that I can say."

To which it may be said that, as he issued into the now deserted street, J. Hartley Dalrymple added other words no less fervent if somewhat less in keeping with the sentiment. Horseshoes, ye gods! and then some. But at that moment fate, in the person of a large, ponderous individual with an implacable mouth, a gimlet eye and a paint-brush mustache, was turning the corner just ahead. He wore a five-pointed gold detective badge.

CHAPTER THREE

WILLIAM HARRISON EMSWORTH ground out an oath, then he turned wrathily to face the grim visage of Constable Silas Pennyfeather. The oath was scarcely in keeping with that cherubic countenance, but its sole effect upon the constable was to cause him to tighten his grip upon the stout young man's collar, according to the most approved metropolitan methods.

"Better come easy, now, young feller; easy does it, by criminy; we've been a-lookin' f'r ye. An' remember that anythin' ye say'll be used ag'in ye, an' ye c'n smoke that with your cigareet! C'mon! Shake a leg, now!"

Young Mr. Emsworth sputtered, he swore, but to no avail, to all his asserverations that "it was a mistake," the constable suggesting in no uncertain terms that he could tell it to the chief. Consequently, it was a very red-faced young man who faced Chief Bascom in his sanctum, who, observing the officer and his captive, spoke the pregnant sentence:

"We've been a-lookin' f'r ye, young feller."

Mr. Emsworth purpled, he opened his mouth, but no words issued therefrom; for a moment it appeared that he would strangle. The chief went on, as if speaking to himself:

"It's th' slick, right enough: brown fedory, gray overcoat. Ye done well, Silas." He turned to Emsworth.

"Now, Mister J. Hartley Dalrymple, I'm right down glad t' see ye, I am that, f'r a fact."

"But I'm not J. Hartley Dalrymple!" shouted Emsworth. "You fathead!"

The chief's mouth tightened to a grim, bodeful line, his eye abruptly cold, his manner menacing.

"You be careful of your language, young feller," he directed. "We got th' goods on ye, make no mistake about that. Mr. Dalrymple was here."

"And you let him go?" gritted Emsworth. He leaned close, biting his words off short, his face grim, the boyish insouciance wiped clear as if by magic. He looked suddenly years older, wiser, with a sophistication the more apparent by contrast with Bascom's startled glance. Abruptly he flung wide his coat. "Do you know what that means?" he asked crisply, pointing at a genuine detective's badge. "And if that is not enough" — he threw some documents, credentials, on the table—"have a look at these."

The chief stared. "Jumpin' horned toads!" he ejaculated in a small voice. Emsworth shrugged.

"Well!" he said disgustedly. "This man Dalrymple—Ferris—he's got a dozen aliases—we've been after him for some time now, but we had nothing on him. Do you get me? I worked the correspondence school stuff and he bit, hook, line and sinker—that's all we

needed, something to hold him on. And now——"

He spread his hands wide in a hopeless gesture. "I guess that settles it," he continued, "unless——"

But the sentence was not completed. There came a sudden commotion from the street without—oaths, the sound of a quick blow; then the door was flung wide and framed in the opening appeared J. Hartley Dalrymple, somewhat the worse for wear, behind him the looming figure of a large man with a paint-brush mustache, who called out:

"Nailed him at Binks Corners, sir, just as he was hopping a rattler for the big town. I figured he'd do just that. I'll admit he had me guessing on the train. But you should have wised me about the card."

"William Harrison Emsworth" grinned, his smile embracing Chief Bascom and the assembled police force of Constable Pennyfeather with a tolerant good-humor.

"All's well that ends well," he said lightly. "But if you want to correspond with J. Hartley Dalrymple, alias Ferris, alias the Philadelphia Flash, you'll have to address him at Atlanta, care of Uncle Sam, and—there'll be no change of address."

VOLCANIC WONDERS

ABOUT ten years ago a new island was reported in that curious Bogoslof Group among the Aleutians off the western extremity of Alaska. This one suddenly rose through seventy fathoms of water and far above, and its rise was accompanied by an earthquake that shook Unalaska and Dutch Harbor.

One of the most remarkable events in the history of this mysterious cluster occurred in 1907. On July 4 of that year officers of the revenue cutter McCulloch made a survey of a mountain, then smoking and fuming as though from its exertion in rising volcanically from the sea among the Aleutian Islands. It was reported in the survey that the peak was 2,000 feet through its base and 495 feet high.

A little more than three months later the McCulloch again visited the place and found that the peak had totally disappeared.

The region in which this extraordinary event occurred has long engaged the attention of scientists and is in fact one of the strangest localities on earth. There seems to be proceeding there a sort of continuous performance of the character of a geographical vaudeville show, in which Nature assumes the rôle of quick-change artist. These startling changes are said to be due to the action of the Bogoslof volcano, in the Aleutian Islands. This volcano was discovered about 1790 by a Russian admiral of that name, and it then constituted a single island, now called Castle Island.

During the winter of 1905-1906 there appeared a new peak about halfway between the old islands. When this peak developed it formed connection with Fire Island, and left a passage between it and Castle Rock in which the least depth of water was five fathoms. This peak was surveyed by officers of the revenue cutter Perry in June, 1906, and was named Perry Peak. The mysterious island surveyed on July 4, 1907, by the McCulloch's officers was then, as has been said, giving forth sulphurous fumes, showing its recent volcanic origin.

This peak had apparently absorbed in its uplift about half of Perry Peak and had filled in the space to Castle Rock, thus making practically one island of the group. It is thought that this peak exploded on September 1, 1907, as at 5 o'clock p. m. a dense black cloud passed over Unalaska Island, covering the land with ashes.

Some years ago the revenue cutter Rush visited this island and found great changes. Perry Peak having disappeared. A high ridge of land extended from Fire Island to Castle Rock, having an elevation of three hundred feet at its highest point; the entrance to the harbor near Castle Rock had filled in; high land was formed to the west-northwest, near Fire Island. The navigator of the Rush made a survey of the harbor as it then existed and found it to be one mile across, with from four to twenty-five fathoms of water.

Some Mysterious Tricks

FEW things are simpler than conjuring—when you know all about it. Here are some confessions of a Parisian prestidigitateur, Prof. Dickson, who explains the method of performing tricks which often baffle the most observant spectator. From the explanations given by the conjurer, any reader may perform the most complex and bewildering mysteries. Take, for instance, the trick of the vanishing bird cage, which has puzzled many audiences in this country. You show your audience a small cage with a bird inside, and you solemnly announce that the bird will vanish. Indeed, at the words, "One, two, three!" the cage and bird disappear so rapidly that the best trained eye is unable to detect their flight.

The explanation of this trick is very simple. The cage must be 8 inches long, 4 inches wide, and 6 inches high, and any one with a little patience and a pair of round pincers can construct it. The bars are made of light copper wire, which may be purchased on a reel. Each length of wire cut should be a quarter of an inch longer than the size required, so as to allow for connecting loops to be made. There should be thirty-four pieces of wire; four for the corners, ten for the front, ten for the back and five for each end. The frame for the top and bottom is made out of two wires cut 8 1-2 inches long to allow for connecting loops. When the skeleton of the cage is completed, cover the looped ends outside with a ribbon of red silk, and inside with a ribbon of green. These should be sewed loose, so as to allow free play of the parts. When this is done the cage appears to be made of bars of wire, solidly fixed in a wooden frame.

The cage is now ready for use. Tie a string to the wrist of your left arm and bring it up along the inside of the sleeve and coat, and down again along the inside of the right sleeve. Having obtained the suitable length, bring your elbows along the sides of the body and extend the string to the opening of the right-hand sleeve. To the latter end, by a loop, attach the cage. If you extend your arms rapidly forward, it stands to reason that the cord becomes too short, and will jerk the collapsed cage inside your right-arm sleeve. Although the presence of a live canary gives realism to the trick, yet the feat is just as satisfactory if performed with a dummy bird.

The Disappearing Ink Trick.—In this trick, which is always very effective if smartly performed, you exhibit a glass filled with ink and place it on the table in front of you. To convince your audience that the glass really contains ink, dip a card into it and withdraw it blackened. Take the ink, pour it on a saucer and borrow from some one a ring, which you propose to dip partially into the ink, but you let it fall into the glass. You now promise to remedy your blunder, not by taking out the ring with your hand and soiling it, but by instantaneously clarifying the ink. Place a large white handkerchief over the glass and, after pulling it off, the receptacle will be found to contain pure water, in which goldfish swim leisurely about. You then easily extract the ring without soiling the hand.

The utmost care is needed in performing this feat. You take a glass, fix against its interior a piece of black indiarubber cloth, to which is attached a black thread. From this hangs a small cork, which you leave falling over the side of the glass, unseen by the audience. Then you fill the glass with water, in which a few fish are swimming about. After the necessary introductory "patter," you cover the glass with your handkerchief and, in taking it up, you catch hold of the cork, which pulls with it the piece of black cloth, giving the inky appearance to the water. This done, the fish swimming in the pure water are discovered.

With regard to the inked card, this should be prepared before the performance by past-

ing together two cards, whose faces are exactly similar, and blackening with anything that is convenient one side only. The ink which you are supposed to abstract from the glass is easily made. Fix on the inside of a moistened spoon some aniline powder, soluble in water. Of course the water taken up by the spoon will at once assume the form of black ink. Like all other delicate conjuring feats, this trick should be performed at some distance from the audience.

The Mysterious Lady.—Few marvels of the conjuring stage seem more marvelous than the bodiless lady trick. Yet, when Prof. Dickson explains how it is performed few feats seem easier. When this phenomenon is exhibited the stage is draped in black, with a striped ceiling, lamps being placed at the side which throw a bright light upon the audience and very little upon the bodiless lady. In the middle of the stage is suspended a trapeze. Upon this rests the bust of a woman. The head speaks, the arms move and lift the body from the trapeze, so that the bust is apparently suspended in the air. The surroundings conspire to deceive the spectator, and he leaves the hall thoroughly mystified.

How is the trick done, you ask? Here is the answer: The bust you see on the trapeze is an artificial one, open at the back, and the trapeze, instead of being formed of a couple of ropes to which a bar is attached, is a long board suspended from the flies of the stage by four ropes, two of which only are seen by the spectators. On this board the performer reclines at full length, inserting her head in the bust at the end of the "trapeze" facing the audience. Her work is then very easy. She can talk, move and swing about, and act as though she were really without body and legs.

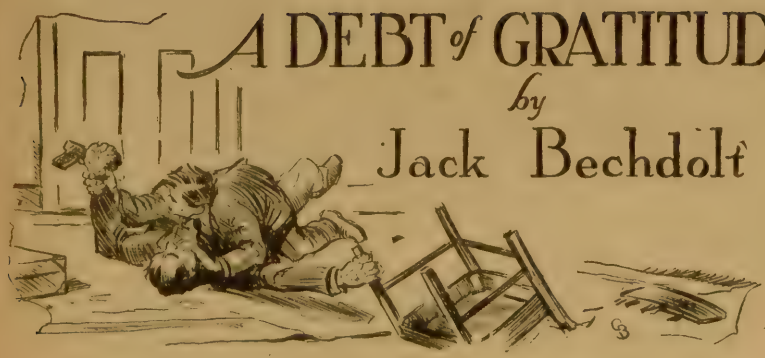
WHEN THE CRICKET CHIRPS OVER A PHONE

PROF. RYAN, a German scientist, has been making amusing experiments with insects and telephones. He put a female cricket in a carefully enclosed glass room, into which he introduced the receiver of a very delicate telephone connected with a distant room in which was a male cricket. When the latter chirped the female heard him distinctly, as she showed by hopping toward the receiver and listening intently.

The Scientific American describes these experiments in detail, as repeated several times with different pairs of crickets, and adds that "they prove, to begin with, the delicate sensitiveness of the telephone even with regard to the sounds made by the lower animals.

"They also reveal hitherto unknown facts regarding the sense of hearing and the mental qualities of insects. It was discovered that the organs of hearing are not situated in the antennae, as was formerly supposed, but in the lower segments of the forelegs. When these segments are lost, the insect finds it difficult if not impossible to perceive the call of its mate. These pseudo 'ears' contain microscopically small strings resembling parchment in their nature and set into the rigid chitin shield. The sound waves which strike these strings are carried through a small tube to the minute auditory apparatus of the insect, which resembles on a small scale a series of organ pipes. From these the vibrations are carried by special nerves to the brain. As will be seen this arrangement suggests that of the nerves in the cochlea of the human ear. However, the tones given forth by insects are, most of them, so extremely high as to be imperceptible by human ears.

"The peculiar chirping sound uttered by the male cricket is made possible by the circumstance that the left wing cover is almost entirely covered by the right wing cover. This enables the insect to draw the right wing with an indented cross vein across a smooth outstanding vein on the top of the lower wing cover, with much the same motion as that of the bow of a fiddle. The sound thus produced is extremely faint in itself, but it is greatly strengthened by means of four resonant bits of parchment-like skin so that it can be heard for a distance of more than 100 metres (about 330 feet)."



A DEBT of GRATITUDE

by

Jack Bechdolt

ENOS ADAMS, a ruddy, erect, youthful figure for all his gray hair and fifty-three years, passing with his usual quiet tread the desk of Hobart Cliff, general manager of his business, let his hand fall lightly on Cliff's shoulder.

The effect of the friendly caress was startling. Hobart Cliff quivered convulsively and a long breath whistled through his teeth. The muscles controlling his head and neck seemed to atrophy suddenly, making it impossible for him to look up at the interrupter.

"Why, Hobart!" Adams laughed. "Scare you? Just stopped to say good-night."

"Of course, of course!" Cliff cried hastily, covering his confusion with volubility. "Good-night to you, Mr. Adams!"

"And, Hobart!"

Cliff had risen respectfully, as he always did when his employer stopped beside his swivel chair. The color was returning to his cheeks. He breathed normally again.

"Yes, sir?" he answered attentively.

"Stop around at the house to-night, will you? Something I want to discuss. Something—er—*rather particular*. Say about nine-thirty? Good! You'll find me waiting."

Enos Adams turned then and went out of the offices of Enos Adams, Inc., an investment and private banking business to which he had devoted his lifetime and which was his pride. He went into the street where his car waited, sank back in the comfortably upholstered seat and told the chauffeur to drive him home. He passed through the streets with a delightful sense of relaxation, of rest well earned after a day's hard work, not altogether unconscious, with an aging man's pardonable vanity, that his fine figure and aristocratic appearance attracted glances. Enos Adams had earned these luxuries by a lifetime of honesty and industry. He liked to think of that and to contemplate, in particular, a scheme he had been revolving in his mind for some time, a scheme now ripe for divulging to Hobart Cliff.

Cliff continued to sit at his desk. He, too, was rather distinguished in appearance, a man of about forty-five. His black hair was let grow a little longer than the fashion and he cultivated a mustache that belonged to another era in facial adornment. His dark, plain clothes, his high linen collar and round, starched, old-fashioned cuffs, the solid watch-chain across his vest, his black creaking shoes, all these things had their peculiar air of solidity and stability and discretion. They suggested to perfection that Hobart Cliff was a middle-aged bachelor, a good church member and a man to be trusted.

"What the devil does the old fool want of me?" Cliff was thinking. "To-night of all nights! Something special, he said. Is it possible that he suspects? No. How silly of me to think that! And besides"—the latest notion made the thin lips under Cliff's mustache quirk into a flitting smile — "I don't have to worry about him. Not now! To-night at nine-thirty I'll be a jolly long way from Enos Adams' library!"

Hobart Cliff laughed, or it might pass for a laugh, a noiseless lifting of the lips that showed beautiful white, shining teeth. His gray eyes did not laugh with his lips. They were calculating.

The night to which he looked forward so keenly was the cumulative epoch of sixteen years of living. Those sixteen years often seemed to him like sixteen years in solitary prison confinement. But there had been a big prize to work for and Cliff did not grudge them.

Sixteen years, hard years for Hobart Cliff, but at the end, at the goal, a fortune to be grasped!

His plan had been deliberate, calculated and consistently followed as few human plans are followed out. Sixteen years of unremitting hard work, of scrupulous honesty, of slavish service to Enos Adams that in the end he might betray him.

The steel vault of Enos Adams contained a fortune in securities, negotiable bonds and a few choice stocks, the accumulated surplus that guaranteed Adams's investment business. That growing hoard had been the prize that lured Cliff into sixteen years of irreproachable living, into ways that he secretly despised. But the years had paid. They had seen him graduated from the post of office messenger to the position of general manager of Enos Adams, Inc., a position in which he had free access to the stored wealth. He had proved his honesty beyond a doubt and Enos Adams trusted him implicitly.

It had been simple as child's play to convert Adams's securities into cash during the past couple weeks, a little here and a little there, without rousing the breath of a suspicion. Simple as child's play, also, to make the plans for his escape with the loot: The hiring of a room in an obscure lodging house where he passed under another name; the purchase of a ticket for a port in Honduras; the selection of a humble and nondescript wardrobe of second-hand clothing. All that remained now was to take what he wished of the remaining securities, add the day's cash accumulation which had come in too late for banking—generous pocket money, that!—walk out of the office and disappear.

When a smooth-shaved, shabbily dressed man with a close hair cut, his eyes guarded from sun glare by black glasses, boarded a Honduras steamship, who would look at him in search of Hobart Cliff?

For that matter the theft itself might pass unsuspected for some days!

The assistant bookkeeper, sighing over belated work, slammed his ledger, put it away in the vault, donned coat and hat and murmured a respectful "Good-night." Cliff was alone in the office now, free to rob the vault without interruption.

He methodically arranged his own desk, destroying one or two papers he did not care to leave for discovery, docketing the day's memoranda neatly, replacing some cards in the index file, even taking care to lay his three pens and a pencil in their customary relation to the big, clean desk blotter—little details, all, that sixteen years had made his ineradicable habit. Time now to take what he wanted from the vault, drop it into his little black bag and be gone.

He turned about, aware of a slight noise.

A man had entered the office and stood outside the rail which separated the public from the clerical force. Evidently the noise had been a cough, for he coughed again, masking the tremor with his hand, an apologetic, humble, self-effacing manner of coughing.

Cliff instantly recognized the cough and the cougher.

"Priest!" he exclaimed, frowning. "Who the devil let you in here at this hour?"

"I'm sorry, Mr. Cliff, but I just had to see you to-day."

"Who let you in?" Cliff persisted, angry.

"A—a man passing out. A bookkeeper." He added hurriedly: "But don't blame him! I said—well, I said we had an appointment."

"I'll attend to that blunderer," Cliff murmured ominously, forgetting for the moment

his own plans. "Now, Priest, no use bothering me to-night. Sorry."

"But you promised me an answer. Did—did you speak to Mr. Adams. Did you ask him——"

"See here, Priest"—Cliff's manner was brisk, with just the right touch of sympathy—"it's a go. I did speak to Mr. Adams. Mr. Adams can do nothing for you. In view of your prison record——"

"In God's name, Mr. Cliff, didn't you tell him that I'm trying to go straight now? Didn't you tell him I learned my lesson? Twelve years there! Wouldn't that teach any man? Did you explain to him?"

Cliff lied readily and glibly:

"I did explain to Mr. Adams. I told him all you say and added my own personal recommendation, exactly as I promised you. Mr. Adams replied, as I feared he would, that he cannot forget the fact you betrayed his confidence and shattered his faith. Mr. Adams cannot forget that thirteen years ago you were caught and convicted for embezzling money belonging to him. Not even under the present circumstances can Mr. Adams do anything to help you. I'm afraid you must take that as final."

"But—but, Mr. Cliff! Listen, Mr. Cliff. There's my wife, you see. She worked like a heroine to look after the kids when—during the time that I was away. She did sewing, sweat-shop work, anything! And it broke her health. She's ill, she—she might die!"

Cliff listened to the man's babbling and despised him. What a weak, useless thing was this Priest! What a bungler and a fool! Thirteen years ago (Cliff was an assistant bookkeeper then) Cliff had caught him in his clumsy embezzlement, and caught him redhanded. That had been Cliff's first great opportunity to prove to Adams how much he had the firm's interest at heart. He had seized the chance and profited richly by it, showing an unholy zeal in prosecuting the clumsy embezzler who stole for no better reason than his hope to gain by a futile speculation a better living for his wife and children. That opportunity had made Cliff successful. But Priest had served his purpose. He was through with Priest when Priest went to prison. Now he only despised the broken man.

"It's no use," he repeated, shaking his head firmly. "No use, Priest."

"If you would just let me speak to Mr. Adams," Priest urged shakily. "If you would let me tell him how it is—how my wife is so ill, how wretched we are."

"No use!" Hobart Cliff repeated. "I told Mr. Adams all those things myself."

"Truly, did you tell him all? Explain everything, my need, my repentance, everything?"

"I did, I tell you!"

Priest straightened suddenly and his eyes flashed anger. For a moment his emotion vitalized him strangely.

"You lie!" he said deliberately. "You lie in every word you say!"

"What!" Cliff shouted.

"You lie! I waylaid Adams on the street to-night. He had never heard of my story. He told me so himself. He sent me to you—said you had his permission to do whatever you pleased about putting me to work. And you, you lied all the time—double-crossed me! Now——"

"Now!" Cliff shouted. "You get out of here! Get out, you jailbird, before I call the police! Get!"

Priest, the broken man, shrank back. He seemed to collapse and fold inward, shriveling. It was as if that recent burst of anger had been the flare of a dying candle and now the spark of his manhood had snuffed out.

"Well—well, Mr. Cliff," he stammered humbly, "you've been a good friend to me. And I'm up against it. You mustn't mind the way I spoke, sir; I'm all upset. We're hungry at home, Mr. Cliff!"

Cliff shook his head angrily.

"I know your charitable disposition. Couldn't you—don't you think you could see your way to making me a loan—just a small loan? Just—well, just fifty dollars, or twenty-five, or five, even!"

"No," said Cliff, "I couldn't. I believe in charity, yes. I subscribe very liberally toward charity. I take a real pride and pleasure in helping deserving organizations, but it must be organized charity, Priest. I do not believe in indiscriminate giving. And I shall not give you a cent."

Cliff hoped that was plain enough, and it

was. The supplicant colored and turned away. He walked with a new dignity—an angry resolution—as he moved toward the door.

Cliff turned away, too, going sedately toward his desk and when the door slammed hard he smiled faintly. Really a man so futile as Priest was better out of the world altogether!

Leisurely Cliff returned to his own plans. He got out his little leather bag and opened the vault. He selected such valuables as he deemed easily disposed of and added the day's cash. Then he made a last survey of the office, his prison these past sixteen years. He laughed his noiseless, feline laugh as he despised it all. He thought of what lay before him—a new country, money, freedom to take his pleasures as he liked them, women, wine, all the gratifications he had denied himself, and his eyes glowed.

The general manager, with his little leather bag, passed into the street, bestowing his usual dignified good-night on the doorman of the building. He hailed a taxi and ordered himself driven to a street not far from the lodgings he had taken in secret. He dismissed the cab at a drugstore and walked the rest of the way, sheltered from observation by the growing dusk. It was no trouble at all to reach his secret haven unnoticed.

Presently he quitted the room again, having added the hoard from his bag to the accumulation secreted in his cheap suitcase. Now he was dressed in the shabby clothing selected for his disguise. He found a barber shop in a basement and from there emerged a completely different man, a smooth-shaven, close-cropped, inconspicuous person made doubly inconspicuous by his dress and manner.

He dined leisurely in a cheap restaurant, good-humoredly putting up with bad food with the prospect of so much before him. His steamship was advertised to sail in the early dawn, a second rate, inconspicuous boat, and he meant to go aboard and to his cabin by ten. This gave him plenty of time to stroll back to the little room for his precious bag of loot.

Cliff unlocked the door of his cheap furnished room, let himself in and methodically locked the door behind him. The room was dark and he found a match in his pocket, humming a gay, naughty little tune all the time. He felt for and found the gas-jet on the wall, turned the cock and scratched his match. His hands were raised for this action, the one turning the gas-cock, the other holding the flaming match. They remained in that absurd position until the flooding gas exploded with a sharp pop! and the match burned his fingers, and still his attitude was frozen.

For he stared face to face with the shabby embezzler Priest, and Priest commanded the situation very securely from behind the barrel of a wicked pistol.

"Keep 'em up!" Priest said briefly. His tone had changed since their interview in the office of Enos Adams, Inc. It was not bullying, nor boastful, nor triumphant, and the volume of his words was even less than his usual dull, futile conversation, but the manner of them, a certain suggestion of taut nerves and hardened will, showed he was desperate and dangerous.

Priest searched Hobart Cliff's clothing carefully, without haste. The general manager's arms ached before he had finished.

Cliff carried no weapon. He scorned clumsy things like weapons. He never thought of associating his enterprise with danger, depending on his superior intelligence to keep him out of situations exactly like this situation he had walked into. So Priest's collection consisted of a few keys, including the key to Cliff's bag of loot, a steamship ticket entitling one L. Miller to passage to Honduras, baggage claim checks, fountain pen and about fifty dollars. Priest collected everything.

During this operation nothing had been said. Hobart Cliff stood with raised arms, beads of sweat gathering on his newly shaved lips and his eyes beginning to narrow as he turned over plan after plan.

Priest stepped back with a sigh.

"You can take your hands down now," he said. "If you're anxious to find out how far I'll go, try to do something—shout, or start a fight. Damn it! I almost wish you would!"

He stepped closer to Cliff and laughed in his face.

"How'd you like the chance to buy me off for fifty dollars now, eh, Cliff? Remember you had that chance a few hours ago? Fifty! No, less than that—*five*—if I remember right.

Just five dollars between you and a getaway and you wouldn't spend the money! We all make mistakes sometimes, old chap, even smart men like Hobart Cliff!"

Cliff licked his lips.

"What" — he murmured hoarsely — "what——"

"What am I up to? That's just what I stopped to tell you. I had your bag half an hour ago, safe. No reason why I should stick around except—well, I couldn't resist the temptation of having a look at you when you get the big idea! I had to see you. By God, I've earned that much real pleasure!" Priest chuckled grimly.

"You fathead!" he resumed, speaking low as ever, but with a biting contempt that brought red into Cliff's cheeks. "If you read men one-half as well as you think you do, you would know when a man's driven to the limit. You'd know how far he'd go without turning. *Five dollars!* That's all it would have cost to save you. You could have bought me off for that. But you didn't, so I did the thing I had planned to do if I was driven into it. I stayed in the office to rob Adams' safe. I was that desperate. You didn't even make sure I went out. I hid in the little coat room as soon as you turned your back. But I didn't have to bother with the safe; you did that for me! And when I followed you it was easy to make out just what you were up to."

Priest paused. His chest was heaving with his deep breathing. His triumph expanded him alarmingly. His eyes, formerly so dull, had wicked, dancing flames in them.

Again Cliff tried his question: "What—er—what——"

"What's to become of you? You're going to stay here and do whatever you damn please. I don't care. I'm going to use your steamer ticket. When they let you out of this room if you want to go to the police or Enos Adams and make a holler, go ahead! Perhaps you can explain to them how you came to shave off your mustache, get your hair clipped, change your clothes and hire a room in a cheap lodging house, passing under a false name. Maybe you can explain how you came to have old man Adams's money with you in a sack. *Maybe* you can!"

Priest jeered hoarsely and the twin flames in his eyes leaped into a blaze of hate.

"It's your turn to be a bum, now!" he cried. "I've collected every cent you got. Go out and rustle if you want more. That's what I had to do from the minute I got out of the pen where you sent me. And now——" His left hand fitted the key into the door, turned the lock and opened it a crack.

At that moment Cliff flung himself upon him.

Priest was not unprepared for this. They went to the floor with a thud and rolled, their arms and legs twined, breast to breast, panting, snarling like two dogs.

Priest still held the pistol. Their fight centered about the weapon. Cliff was unexpectedly triumphant, broke Priest's grip and snatched it free. But he made the mistake of trying to discharge it. The hammer clicked on an empty cylinder.

Before Cliff could do more, almost before he realized that the pistol was not loaded, Priest had snatched it back and brought the butt end of it crashing down on his skull.

Priest dragged the insensible man under the light, leisurely bound him with a rope taken from his coat pocket and got him onto the bed, where he covered him with a blanket.

He went out, locking the door behind him, and left the lodging house unmolested. Fights were not unusual in that place. Apparently their struggle attracted no attention.

Five days later a shivering nondescript, his head bound with a dirty bandage, collected an armful of old papers from a city square and carried them into the arch of a gateway to make his bed for the night. The evening was cold and sleety. The man who hugged his thin coat so close about him was Hobart Cliff, late manager for Enos Adams and now a man without home or friends or even a name—barred from all help by the impossibility of explaining the startling change in his appearance and circumstance.

As he spread out the sheets of sodden pulp paper a black headline caught his attention and he carried it to the corner arc-lamp to read.

BROKER STRICKEN AS HE SIGNS NEW WILL

HEART FAILURE KILLS ENOS ADAMS IN LIBRARY OF HIS RESIDENCE

In letters of fire one paragraph stood out before Cliff's eyes:

Just before his death, as if obeying an uncanny premonition, Mr. Adams altered his will to read: "To Hobart Cliff in token of my undying gratitude for his faithful service and devotion to my business during sixteen years, I bequeath the entire business of Enos Adams, Inc., its stocks, bonds, securities, cash and good will.

Then Hobart Cliff understood that what he had risked and lost everything for might have been his as a free-will gift had he waited one day longer—had he remained an honest man but a few hours longer. It would have been better for him to have done so.

With his own hand he had ruined the business of Enos Adams, bankrupting it and himself:

NEW MACHINE READS CHARACTER

THE German scientist is a great believer in machines, and the latest manifestation of this belief is a machine for "reading character." It is the invention of Prof. Burger of Berlin, and he calls it the "plastometer." By the aid of this machine, which is fitted to the head of the patient, or victim, as the case may be, the professor says he is able to tell all about what the person under observation would do under given circumstances.

Of course, Prof. Burger is a believer in phrenology, which means that every bump or cavity in the skull means something special. His machine is to get the exact measurements of parts of the head, and from this he can gauge the moral strength or weakness of his patient, he declares. He bases his findings on the measurements of hundreds of heads, the owners of which have more or less well known traits of character. From what is known the professor figures the meanings his machine records on the heads of persons he knows nothing about.

This means that your moral character can be read by measure, according to Prof. Burger.

"With this instrument," he says, "one can in an hour's time discover more about the heart and soul, and even the body, of the patient than could be discovered in the course of months of keen observation."

Naturally, even a machine is not quite perfect, but the professor claims it is perfect in general results, and in all cases he believes that more than 70 per cent. of his deductions are accurate. He expects, therefore, to see his machine installed in all sorts of places where accurate knowledge of a person's character is important. In police stations, for instance, he believes that many an innocent person will gain quick freedom when accused of some crime which the machine will show could not possibly have been committed by the prisoner. He does not believe that the machine will detect criminals. What it will show, he says, are certain tendencies that may indicate that the accused might have committed a crime. Even this much, he says, will be a great aid in the work of the police.

In industry Prof. Burger believes his machine will find an important place, as it will show the possibilities of young people about to make their start in life. By a plastometer examination, he says, they can be put on the right road, or be guided from a wrong road they are preparing to take.

Whether the machine will ever come into general use, even in Germany, remains for the future to decide. At least it is interesting and will provide considerable food for discussion for all those who are believers in what the scoffers have long called "bumpology." There is nothing mysterious about the plastometer. It is simply putting the old science of phrenology on a plane of higher accuracy, say those who have talked with the professor and studied his invention

Fighting Warrior Ants

BY AUSTIN BEAM

IT was in Honduras, while on a Government survey, that I first saw warrior ants.

One intensely hot day, as I sat idly swinging in a hammock under the roof of my bamboo hut, a native came running in and, with excited gesture, bade me follow him.

I did so wonderingly, and going out into the open looked in the direction he indicated.

There, on the rolling savanna, stretched a wide black belt, extending far back into the deep shadows of the adjacent forest. It rose and fell with every formation of the ground and, like a huge snake, slowly crept toward the village.

"The warrior ants," explained the native in a strange patois of English and Spanish, which I shall not attempt to imitate. "They will soon be here," he continued; "you had better untie your dogs, or the ants will kill them."

Acting upon his advice, I loosed my dogs, and retiring to a safe distance, watched the approach of the warriors. In countless multitudes they swarmed over the plain, marching in compact order like a well-drilled army. Before them scurried a heterogeneous mass of lizards, grasshoppers, frogs, beetles and all other manner of insects and reptiles, in a wild scamper to escape to a place of safety.

Presently the advance guard reached my hut and disappeared within, then the main column appeared and soon the roof, floor, walls and rafters were black with them.

Like the soft rustle of dried grass stirred by a gentle breeze came the sound of their presence in the leaves of my thatched roof. The sound increased in loudness as the rats, mice, lizards, cockroaches, centipedes and others of their like, who had long made the roof their home, vainly tried to escape. Some succeeded in getting away from the house, but only to fall victims to the surrounding hordes without.

The most exciting battle was with a snake about three feet long, that tried to slip away unseen. The ants quickly surrounded him, however, and fought with terrible ferocity. With every switch of his tail the snake killed a score of his tormentors, but their places were soon filled from the black swarm which swept unceasingly on. Finally the writhings of the snake became fainter and fainter, and at last ceased entirely, and then, and not until then, did the ants relinquish their attack.

All day long they marched through the house until at sundown the end of the column had passed and was lost to view in the thickness of the forest.

I entered my house and prepared to survey ruefully my larder, but my anticipations of sorrow were premature, for there were all my provisions as I had left them—untouched.

I afterward learned that the warrior ants refuse to touch any food that they themselves have not caught and slain, which accounted for my provisions remaining unmolested.

I was overjoyed at the change in my house—not a cockroach, lizard, or any other insect or reptile was left. They had been completely exterminated.

My second experience with warrior ants was not attended with such pleasant results.

I had been hunting all day in a vast forest with fairly good luck, but as dusk approached I found that in my enthusiasm I had wandered from the trail and that I was practically lost.

Dreading the possibility of having to remain all night in the forest without my pablo (mosquito net), I looked round for a point of vantage from which to survey the surrounding country and get my bearings. Selecting a large cabbage-palm tree whose top towered high above the others, I removed my heavy hunting-boots and started on my upward journey. The smooth surface of the tree rendered

it difficult climbing. When about half-way up I slipped and fell to the ground, a distance of about thirty feet.

Fortunately the earth beneath was soft and spongy and I escaped without being injured internally.

I tried to rise, but a sharp thrill of exquisite agony which shot through my left leg made it impossible. I had broken my leg and the unpleasant fact that I was helpless and must lie there all night stared me in the face.

My ultimate rescue troubled me but little, for I knew it was a question of a comparatively short time before my absence from the village would be discovered and a search party sent out.

The long hours dragged along, and the mosquitoes bit unmercifully.

Finally the sun rose, and with the day came a strong sea breeze, which swept my persecutors, the mosquitoes, far inland.

Listlessly I glanced about and my eyes fell upon what seemed to be a large green blanket that I had noticed before, about forty feet away.

I lazily speculated as to what it was, when presently a tremor ran through and it appeared to move.

On it came toward me across the open, slowly dragging over the uneven ground as though propelled by some invisible force.

Suddenly the truth flashed upon my mind—it was the advance guard of an army of warrior ants, and the tiny green leaves composing the moving mass were each carried by one of them.

My heart sank as I remembered the fate of the snake and thought of my helpless condition. Fascinated, I watched their preparations for the onslaught. The green mass stopped. The ants had discovered an enemy in their path.

Messengers had been sent to the rear and soon the main body appeared. They marched as I had seen them before—in a compact column about six feet wide, and extending as far back as the eye could reach. On they came, closer and closer.

Suddenly I felt a shooting pain in my feet, like the puncture of a red hot needle; then another, and in an instant my body was covered with the ferocious insects. They penetrated deeply into my flesh. They doubled themselves up and clung to me with bulldog tenacity. Hundreds I killed, but thousands remained to take their places.

Maddened with pain, I shrieked aloud and screamed like a hurt child. Answering cries were heard, and a party of natives burst through the bush.

They took in the situation at a glance and, rushing in among the ants, picked me up and bore me away from my terrible assailants

THE DEEPEST GOLD MINE

THE world's deepest gold mine is the Morro Velho, in Brazil, where the Portuguese were first induced to settle by the discovery of the yellow metal. The first gold was discovered in 1699, near the present city of Auro Preto. The gold was coated with a black substance, and hence was called "auro preto" — black gold. The city which they founded was long called Villa Rica de Ouro Preto — the Rich City of Black Gold — a name which was somewhat cumbersome even for the Portuguese, so they finally shortened it to just Ouro Preto, the name by which it is known to-day. Once it was the most important city in Brazil, the valuable metal being obtained from the gravel of almost every stream in the region. The great gold vein of the Morro Velho mine is described by Benjamin LeRoy Miller and Josephy T. Eingewald, Jr., in the Bulletin of the Pan-American Union. They compare the vein to a gigantic knife-blade held vertically and thrust into the earth at this angle, with the point still lower than the present deepest workings. And it is these workings that make the mine remarkable. The combined depths of the connected shafts give a total of 5,824 feet. In other words, here is a gold mine that is being worked at a depth of more than a mile below the surface of the earth.

WHEN THE DEAD BREAK SILENCE

by

Willis Knapp Jones

"HE'S dead!"

"Dead? Why, that's impossible! I was talking with him at his club less than an hour ago. He told me to come to the office. What kind of a joke is this?" Barclay thought the clerks in Dunston Co. were having fun at his expense.

But even as he looked from one to the other of the clerks, something in their white faces convinced him that it was no joke. He stood irresolute until the office door opened and two men entered. "We're from the Central office. Dugan's my name. You sent for us."

Yes, it must be true. Julian Dunstan was dead. And gone was the chance for Barclay's promised increase in salary with all that it implied. Still, newspaper training triumphed over disappointment. He became at once the reporter, alert and with a nose for news. "I suppose there's no objection to my seeing the body," he suggested, showing his reporter's card.

"Guess not." Dugan took the little identification booklet and glanced at it. "It's all right. The *Blade's* always been pretty fair to us. Where's the body?"

A clerk opened the door to a side room, and Dugan and the other policeman entered, followed closely by Barclay. Directly before them they saw Dunston's private desk and back of it, leaning on his right arm and partly facing the two windows which lighted the room, the body of Julian Dunston sprawled over his desk. It looked as though the stock broker was sleeping. Not a sign of violence anywhere. Even his graying hairs lay smoothly back in a careful part. But closer examination quickly convinced them that no life remained.

Barclay tried the door which gave into the outside corridor. It was locked, with the key on the inside. Then Dugan, stepping toward the window, stopped and pointed. On the floor, between the desk and the window, lay a revolver.

While the policemen were marking the spot with chalk, and discussing the weapon, Barclay called up his paper. Here was a scoop. "Hello, hello, the *Blade*? Barclay, Bert Barclay, talking. Dunston, the big broker, is dead. They've just found his body in his office. Looks like suicide. Only entrance through main office. Door to the corridor locked. Yes, windows are shut, too. No, the clerks didn't hear any noise, but with all this blasting going on that doesn't prove anything. His office? Fourth floor, Mackey Building. Yes, Julian Dunston, that's the man. The story is ours so far, no other reporter's been around. Send

that out, and I'll get more details for the next extra."

He hung up the receiver and went back to the detectives. This wasn't much like the story he had expected to get. He remembered the talk he had had with Dunston so short a time before. "Come up to my office and I'll give you one of the biggest sensations that has broken for years," the stock broker had promised him. "I want very much to help you. I'll do everything I can for you." And here he was, dead.

Dugan and his partner were looking over the scene of the crime, not in orthodox detective style with magnifying-glasses and tape-measure. They were considering the revolver. The top drawer on the right side of the desk was partly open, and a box of cartridges lay in it. Evidently the weapon had been kept there.

"This was what did the mischief," said one of the policemen. "I wonder why he shot himself."

Barclay was still stupefied. He could not believe his friend would take his own life. Standing with his back to the windows, he looked down into the calm countenance without a sign of worry in it. He remembered the care-free voice that had joked with him over the telephone. "No, he couldn't," he mused aloud. "Why, that's so. Where's the powder burn about the wound? I thought those who shoot themselves always have some such mark." The forehead was entirely white except for the bloody spot where the bullet had entered.

Dugan came over to look before he answered. He was inclined to be patronizing. "Oh, it sometimes happens that way. The writer-chaps always make that an important clue, but it falls through this time. It's a clear case, though. Nobody in the room, door locked, one shell exploded, man killed with one shot. What more do you want?"

Barclay walked over to the window and looked out. Four stories below him traffic hummed in the busy street. There were no fire-escapes near. It must be true, then, although he could not bring himself to believe it.

He turned to hear the detectives talking together. "It's curious he should pull the trigger with his left hand unless he's left-handed." So they, too, were finding it strange.

"No, he was right-handed," Barclay interposed. He took the revolver. "Look!" he shouted after examining it a moment. "The safety catch is still on. How could a man shoot himself to kill himself instantly as this shot must have done" (Dugan nodded assent), "and then put on the safety catch and throw it way off there on the floor?"

"But don't you see there couldn't be any other explanation? No one could get in here and do it." They were tolerant of this amateur, but his theory was so foolish. "Now this revolver——" Dugan tapped it with his finger. Then he frowned. He sniffed at the barrel. He took it to the window and squinted into the cylinder. "Hump!" He passed it to his assistant. "Look at it. There's still oil on the inside of the barrel. If it was fired, there'd be powder marks, too. S'pose you aim it out of the window and shoot it."

At the sound of the explosion the clerks came rushing in. Barclay had another idea. "Have you been in the outside office ever since Mr. Dunston came back from lunch?" When they assented, "and didn't you hear any shot before?"

"That wouldn't tell us anything," the detectives objected. "They're nervous now and would notice anything unusual. Beside, you said yourself that there was lots of noise in the street."

"Yes, that was what I thought at first," the reporter confessed, "but an explosion from blasting in the street isn't like the shot of a revolver in the next room."

Dugan assured the clerks that they could not help, and sent them outside. Then he turned his attention again to the revolver. Now the muzzle was smoke stained. He broke the gun and examined the chamber. The two used shells were next to each other, but one was dented exactly in the center and the other near the rim.

"Curious hammer that revolver has to hit in different spots at different times," jeered Barclay.

Dugan's confidence had plainly been shaken. He went over and looked at the door opening into the hall. He extracted the key and examined the end of it. "Well, they didn't try to

fool us with that old trick of locking the door from the outside with a pair of pliers." He packed back and forth, his eyes searching the floor. Once he stooped and picked up something, only to throw it down again.

The newspaper man recovered it and examined it in turn. "What's this?" he inquired.

"Looks like a finger-nail. He's been clipping his nails."

Barclay held it closer. The edge of the nail showed a very irregular line. Such ragged cut could never have been made by clipper or scissors. He went to the dead man and studied his hands. The slim, polished nails showed signs of recent manicuring. He bit a nail from his own finger and compared the two. At once he knew that whoever had committed the murder—for now he had renounced completely the idea of suicide—had had time to bite his fingernails while he waited. That might mean that he was hiding when Dunston returned from lunch. If so, where?

On two sides of the room long filing drawers stood against the wall, but on the side back of the desk there was a recess between the cabinets and the window. He crouched in it, and knew that his reasoning had been correct, for on the floor beside his were several other torn fingernails. With Dugan's help he experimented and found that to any one who entered from the main office and turned at once to hang his hat on the nails to the left of the entrance, a man hiding in that recess would be invisible.

The next question was, how could a person get there and get away again unseen? That room had only two doors, one from the hallway, which was locked with a key on the inside, and the other from the main office, which was in plain sight of three clerks, two of whom had been there during the lunch hour. The two windows facing on the street were the only entrances left.

All three of the men looked out. Just below the ledge an ornamental coping projecting about two inches ran across the front of the building. By it a person could make his way along, grasping the stone of the opening to bridge the five feet between the two windows. The lower part of the farthest sash showed an abrasion where something had been inserted to pry up the window. Whoever committed the crime must have come from the office next-door. That would be the place to inspect.

When they went into the corridor they found the door of the next office unlocked and the room empty. Dugan dropped on his hands and knees before the closed window. He gave a cry of triumph. The floor had been swept recently, but a tiny strip of dust lay close to the baseboard. And plainly marked in it was the outline of the tip of a toe. "You see," the detective condescended to explain, "the man stepped here while he was climbing out of the window."

They had the whole crime now, step by step. The murderer had entered the empty room, opened the window, made his way across the ledge and forced the window to Dunston's private office. Then he had climbed inside to hide behind the filing cabinet. Mr. Dunston, coming back from lunch, was at his desk when the murderer attacked him. Probably he had tried to get his own revolver out of the desk drawer. Here came a little gap which they could not explain, how the shot could have been fired without any of the clerks hearing it. After the crime had been committed, the murderer had evidently escaped as he had come.

Only two trifling details were lacking: the name of the murderer and the motive. They hoped to get some light on the first puzzle by interviewing the agent who rented offices, but they were disappointed. The gentleman seem surprised to hear that the door was unlocked. He remembered having shown the room to a client several days before. The hazy description that he gave, however, would fit any number of men.

Nor were the boys who ran the elevator any help. They could not remember all the people they had carried during the rush hours about noon. Beside, the man who shot Dunston might well have walked down to the street and not used the elevator at all.

Greatly discouraged, Dugan returned to the scene of the crime with Barclay following. They looked about again. The reporter pointed to a letter-file. "Did you notice this?" Two sheets, they discovered, were partly torn out, and by the numbering of the pages they knew that one letter had been taken. They called in a clerk, but as only a single set of du-

plicates were kept, he could not tell to whom the missing letter had been written.

"That's a shame, Mr. Dugan. If we could find about this letter, we'd know more about the man. But at least there is a motive, when we discover it."

"Don't you worry, young man. "I'll get it safe enough. Leave it to me," Dugan counseled. "There are all sorts of clues around here that point to the man, only you can't see them."

"Such as——" prompted Barclay.

"Can't tell you yet. Come around in a couple of days, and I'll tell you I've hooked the murderer. Till then don't give too much information in your news story."

The reporter remembered the advice as he wrote an account for his newspaper. Some of the details he suppressed, others he toned down, for it would never do to warn the criminal. He treated the matter of clues as vaguely as had the detective; but one thing he did stress, that it was murder and not suicide. The article, when he had done, ran over two columns.

Contrary to his usual custom, he read it over and was satisfied, so satisfied, in fact, that on his way out he stopped at the desk of the editor who had arrived to begin his evening's work. Barclay told him about the murder and the write-up. "It's a scoop, sir. Not another paper on the street will touch it." Then, pausing to gain courage, he went on: "Don't you think that is worth the raise you said you would consider? It would mean a lot to me to get it just now."

The city editor shook his head. "We've talked about this before, Barclay. You're a good enough man, but we're paying you all you're worth. Later, certainly you'll get an increase. As for to-day's story, of course you'll get the customary bonus on that; but you'll have to admit, after all, that it was only luck that you were on the ground when the story broke. What I've told you before still holds. Show me something that takes real brains, and you'll get a boost. For instance, you covered this story to-day, now find out who killed Dunston and let us give the information to the police. That would be a test of brains. Then we'd talk about that salary raise"

"Good-afternoon, sir." The young man went out downcast.

At first he felt he didn't want to see or talk with anybody, but the sight of a public telephone booth made him remember a promise, and reluctantly he called a number. "Hello, 's that you, Corinne? Yes, this is Bert." Weariness and disappointment tinged his voice. "Well, all those plans we made this noon are called off. Dunston was killed before I saw him, so I don't get my raise. I asked the chief, but he said nothing doing yet. Your father won't give me a ghost of a show till I get some coin. No, I wasn't coming up. I'm too grouchy. What? Well, if you think you can stand me, I'll be around. About eight? Suits me."

By this time the extras were out. It was a clean beat. Not another paper had a word about the murder. The *Blade* had found a cut of Julian Dunston in its morgue (where photographs and biographies of men likely to achieve newspaper notoriety are kept) and, with a story of his life, the paper had almost the entire front page devoted to the murder. Barclay looked over his copy at supper, then slipped it into his pocket when he went to call that evening on Corinne Lee.

Those who follow the social notes need be told nothing about Miss Lee. Her name appeared among the first of "Those Present" in every big social affair. Rarely a week passed without her figure adorning the pages of some Sunday illustrated section. She had plenty of friends and scores of admirers. Rumor has it that a certain Russian duke paid half a million for a staunch yacht because Corinne had declared she adored it and was mad about sailing. Why, from all her followers, she had chosen to love a newspaper reporter without much money is one of those flips that tease those who think they understand women. But it was so. She had given her heart to him, and welcomed him at any time.

With Mr. Lee, her father, it was different. In one caustic interview he had pointed out that his daughter spent more on hats alone than the reporter earned. In vain were Barclay's pleas of "prospects."

"Results, results are what I look at," the railroad man had barked in tones he usually reserved to order the immediate smashing of

some troublesome competitor. "Let's see some of those 'prospects.' Get a substantial increase in salary before the month is over, and we'll talk business." He liked the young fellow, but he loved his daughter. That was the difference.

Mr. Lee wasn't in sight when Corinne met Barclay in the parlor that night. After an affectionate greeting they sped away like a pair of conspirators to the darkest corner of the sitting-room.

"Won't the editor do anything for you?" the girl asked.

"He might raise my salary a little if I told him I wanted to get married; but 'substantial increase' was what your father told me. I'm sure I would have had it, too, except for this murder. You know I told Dunston about my troubles. He's the best friend I had, next to you. That was why he promised to give me a story that would have been big. And it would have meant my raise, I'm sure. Newspaper men are paid about as much because of influential friends that they have as because of their ability. I'd like to choke that murderer. Don't think my sorrow is just because I lost that chance. It means a double loss."

"Oh, this money question makes me sick! I have plenty for both of us, and——"

"Corinne! Do you know me so slightly that you think I'd be content to live on your money? But we'll fix it somehow. The boss says he'll come across if I find who killed Dunston."

"Why don't you, then? I know you can. Why, daddy says you ——" But whatever it was remained untold, for Mr. Lee came into the sitting-room.

Both the young people jumped up, and Barclay, to start conversation, pulled from his pocket a copy of the extra. "You may not believe in our sheet, Mr. Lee, but here's where we beat your *Globe*." He spread out the newspaper.

The railroad man glanced at the headlines. His face blanched, and he clenched his fists. "Dead!" he gasped.

"Yes, they're on trail of the murderer. The detectives promise to have him by to-morrow. Why—why,—what's the matter?"

Mr. Lee staggered slightly, and clutched at the table. Then he reeled blindly from the room.

"Are you sick, daddy?" Corinne called, running after him. Presently she sent down word that she could not leave her father, and Barclay went dismally out of the house. He had not realized that Mr. Lee had known Dunston well enough to be shocked by his death.

With many conflicting thoughts he spent the night reviewing strange hosts of mixed-up dreams, and so early in the morning did he call at Dugan's office that the detective was not in. He reported, when he arrived, that nothing new had turned up. Barclay, who made another examination of Dunston's office, closed the day with as little progress.

By the third day most of the newspapers were scoring the inefficiency of the police force in letting such a crime go unpunished.

Barclay went to headquarters, where he found a very discouraged Dugan. "This is for you, and not for publication," the detective confessed. "We're stuck. We've been over every conceivable clue in that office. There isn't a single one worth following. But tell the genial public we're confident." He laughed cheerlessly. "They like that sort of bunk, and we may find something—by accident."

It was while he was writing up this story that Corinne called him by telephone. Her voice was excited. "I believe you and I can find out who killed your friend. Can you come up to-night? On your way, buy a copy of MYSTERY MAGAZINE and read the third article in it."

But Barclay did not wait that long. He sent out and got a copy, his hopes that something might happen rising again. Turning to the twenty-third page he read the title, "Do the Dead Survive?" Then followed a consideration of the Spirit World, written by an author whose stories of the fantastic were eagerly read.

It was with a growing smile that he looked over the pages. Barclay had attended seances. He had seen tables tip and hands fly through the air. But he had witnessed these same feats performed by clever magicians who made no claims to connections with the Realm of Departed Souls. The whole article struck him as a gigantic hoax, another story of the fantastic written for the gullible. That spirits re-

turn to talk and write appealed to his sense of humor. He could not consider it at all seriously.

But it was evident, when he saw her, that Corinne had taken the article in earnest. "Didn't you see what it said? If such scientists as Sir William Crookes and Sir Oliver Lodge believe it, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle defends it, there must be something in it. Now here's my idea. There's a medium in the city; not a regular one. But I'm sure she's not a fake. Go to her and ask her about the murder. You say Dunston would do anything for you. Get him back and ask him."

Barclay turned to see if the girl were joking, but her eyes looked into his with seriousness. He laughed aloud. "My dear girl, do you for a moment think that article is true? Can't you see it's a story from beginning to end, written by a clever short-story writer, and published in an all-story magazine. It's the skill of the author to make it sound true. There's nothing in this spook business. Of course I won't go to this fortune-teller."

"Fortune-teller? She's no fortune-teller. Just try it once. She lives on 59th Street; 444 is the number. Her name is Fry. She doesn't do this as a regular business, doesn't even advertise. You will go, won't you?"

"No, I won't go."

"But if I ask you——"

"No, not if you ask me. I won't make a fool of myself for any one."

"Please, Bert."

"No. That's final. No. You're too gullible for anything."

Corinne Lee rose with dignity. "If you think so, we better have nothing more to do with each other. Here, take this." She stripped off her engagement ring and held it out. As he made no move to take it, she dropped it to the table and walked from the room.

He picked up the ring and gazed stupidly after her. "Corinne! Corinne, wait a moment," he called. She paid him not the slightest attention. He seized his hat and went out dejectedly. "What darned foolishness! Just 'cause I wouldn't go to call on a ghost hunter."

He walked slowly toward his house. Of course he wouldn't chase up Mrs. Fry. How could she tell him what the best detectives on the force didn't know? Yet as he walked his brain began to clear. If it would please Corinne, he'd do it. After all, what difference did it make?"

His mind made up, he jumped on a passing car and came to his destination. He found the house and was ushered into a tiny room on the second floor. One glance at it, and he believed Corinne's statement that Mrs. Fry was no regular medium. She seemed to live in an age long past. Evidently the girl who answered his knock had been disturbed in a job of repairing. Her hand, as she opened the door, was full of brass tacks. He noticed at once that the Boston rocker had the chintz pleating around its seat only partly fastened.

"I'm very ill," the girl apologized when he inquired for Mrs. Fry. "My mother is ill, and can't see you. Will you come back next week some time?"

Was this to be the reward for his fool errand? He knew that the quarrel with Corinne made it impossible for him to see her and prove it was all a fake without his seeing the lady. "Isn't it possible, only for a little while? I've just got to see her."

At his look of despair, the girl's face softened. "Well, I'll ask her, but I'm afraid not. Sit down a moment."

He dropped down into a rush-bottomed chair near the door and waited. His eyes fell upon a much-worn braided rug and then jumped to an old-fashioned mantel with maccrene lace tacked about the edge. It was a glimpse into another century. He remembered a visit he had made many years before to his grandmother's farmhouse. If anybody could talk with people from the past, he would expect it to be a person living amid such surroundings.

"Mother will be here in a minute," the girl announced upon her return; "but she can't see you long. She's sick."

"I'm glad she's coming. You see, I have a friend—that is—I—he did—and——"

"Yes, I see. You want to talk with him, to get into communication with him. Probably you can. Then you'll excuse me while I finish this job. Mother always uses this chair." She squatted onto the floor and began again to tack the pleats into place.

"And how much does Mrs. Fry charge for —for talking with—them?" he demanded.

"What are your telephone rates to Mars?" would have been just as sensible a question, he thought to himself.

"Usually five dollars. Sometimes she gets more. You know the Society for Psychical Research once had mother do six sittings for them and they paid her two hundred dollars. You can read about them in their records."

Barclay knew from the article he had read in the magazine that the society she mentioned was formed of keen scientists and thinkers. If this medium could fool all of them she must be clever. He rather pictured some mysterious sort of vampirish woman. So he was totally unprepared for Mrs. Fry when she entered the room.

She was tiny and frail. Her black dress rather accentuated the paleness of her face. The brown cameo pin with its raised white head that she wore at her throat did nothing to relieve her sombreness.

"There you are, mother," the girl greeted her, rising from her task. "Your chair is ready." She tossed the surplus brass tacks onto the marble top of the mahogany center table.

"I'm afraid we can't do much, but my daughter tells me you are in trouble, and I'll try." Mrs. Fry seated herself in the Boston rocker close by the window. "No, don't tell me what you want. I'll find that out soon."

She chatted for a few minutes about the weather and kindred subjects, until she seemed to be getting drowsy. Her head dropped. She began breathing heavily. Her right hand clutched convulsively.

Going to an old glass-knobbed desk, the girl took out a pad of paper and a sharpened pencil, putting them into her mother's lap. "Now if you'll tell me whom you want," she inquired.

"Julian Dunston."

The girl repeated the name, but not to Mrs. Fry's ear. She seemed to be addressing her words to the hand.

In a moment it made the sign of the cross and began to write. Barclay leaned over to read the words. "Hello, Greeley," was written in a bold, masculine script, very like the writing of his friend.

"Well, I'll be darned," Barclay ejaculated. Dunston used to scoff at his newspaper aspirations, and "Greeley" was one of the nicknames he had bestowed in jest.

"What test do you want before we start? Get something you can verify later. Time and space are as nothing to the spirits. They can go anywhere, and see anything. Perhaps you'd like to know what some friend is doing, for instance."

Barclay took from his pocket the ring that the girl had just given back to him. "Yes, tell me what the owner of this ring is doing."

She repeated the question to the hand. An intense silence brooded. The newspaper man started at a sound behind him, then breathed a sigh of relief. It was only a cuckoo clock striking nine o'clock.

Before the bird had retired into its house the hand began moving. "She is crying. She has a photograph of you and is writing. The letter says, 'I was a silly, stubborn girl to——' "

"Enough, enough!" shouted Barclay, snatching the paper. He did not consider it honorable to pry upon the actions of a girl in the privacy of her room. "Now ask him what I came to learn. Find out why he was killed."

As the pad was put back in place, the hand twitched nervously. It remained motionless for a long time. Suddenly with a burst of speed it made an "R," then another "R." As it started upon the third character the point broke. Still the hand wrote, and from the indentation of the paper Barclay saw that it was the figure "4." It tried to continue, only to trail aimlessly off. Barclay's throat was dry. He licked his lips nervously.

Mrs. Fry groaned. The girl, whose eyes had never left her mother's face, sighed. "She's coming out of it now. That's all she can tell you. She's too ill to do more."

"No, no, she must say more. She must tell me who killed him."

"But she's too weak to go on."

"Oh, make her say just that. Just one word, so I'll know." He leaned over. "Who was it, Jule?" he cried, speaking to the hand as he had seen the girl do.

Again the medium groaned. "Can't you see it's impossible? Mother is sick. She might die."

"Just a single word. Please, Jule. You said you'd do anything for me. Do this."

Both of the medium's hands dropped to her side, and the pad and pencil rolled to the floor. The pad landed face down, but the pencil rolled across to the foot of the table. Then they heard another groan, and the sound of a whisper: "Oh, I must go back!" But behind them came a rattle and the scraping of furniture. Both of them saw the center table move. On its marble top the tacks were rolling wildly. They stopped in some curious arrangement.

"It's so dark," Mrs. Fry was saying.

"Look!" In his excitement, Barclay gripped the girl's arm. "Look! They're letters backward. There's an S and an L and two E's. Slee." His mind snapped. He had never heard of the name Slee, but the last three letters he knew. Was it Corinne's father? Like a flash came the memory of the man's face when Barclay had said the detectives were on the trail of the murderer. The reporter caught up the pad that the messages had been written on. "R.R.4" he read. And Mr. Lee was a railroad magnate. The young man did not remember his initials, but one might have been S.

"Did you get what you wanted?" Mrs. Fry was asking. Her eyes looked like a sleeper awaking.

"I don't know. It doesn't make much sense to me," he confessed, "or else it makes too much. May I take the paper?"

She apologized again for not being able to tell him more, begging him to come back later in the week when she felt betttep. He paid her and raced down the stairs. He must go at once and see Mr. Lee. How he would make his charges he did not know. It would be hard to accuse the father of the girl he intended to marry of the death of his best friend. It might be better to see Corinne first. She could not be in bed at so early an hour.

The lower part of the house was dark, but Barclay saw a light in Corinne's room and sent up his name. He waited for her in the hall, not wishing to go into the sitting-room, even though he saw the hospitable fire blazing on the hearth. Word was brought that she had retired with a headache and could not come down. "I've seen Mrs. Fry," he scribbled on a card. "Have very important news. Please bring the note you were writing me. I need it for proof."

At the end of ten minutes she came down. Her eyes were red.

"Did you bring the note?" he asked. "Yes, I know you were writing one. The medium told me." Slyly she shook her head. "Then tell me whether this is the way you began it? If Dunston told the truth in this, I'll believe him in the rest." Barclay unfolded the paper he had torn from Mrs. Fry's pad. "Is this what you said first?"

She stared at it, then colored. "Yes—where—where?"

"He wrote that as a test. And he said something else, too."

"Come into the sitting-room and tell me about it. Did he tell you who—who killed him?" She almost whispered the last words.

"Yes. At least he said the murderer was named Slee."

"Who is that?" she asked, switching on the light.

"I don't know. I thought perhaps your father——"

"No," she screamed. "Not my father! My father didn't kill him."

"What?" At the voice both jumped. Mr. Lee leaped up from a big cozy chair in front of the fire. Neither of them had seen him. "Killed whom? I didn't kill whom?"

Barclay's ready wit smoothed a difficult situation. "She didn't let me finish. I was saying that perhaps you might know a Mr. Slee." There was no remedy. They had to tell the whole story.

When the reporter finished, Mr. Lee shook his head. "I don't understand. But as far as killing Dunston—why, his death probably will cost me a quarter million dollars. He was a great friend of mine. But if ever I find who killed him, there'll be some more done." Seeing the amazement on their faces, he explained. "This is not for publication, not till the man is caught. Somebody has been manipulating Railroad 4's and Dunston was investigating. He wanted sure proof before he denounced the man."

"Then it *is* true." Barclay produced the slip of paper. "That was what he said." I asked why, and the answer came 'R.R.4.'"

The railroad magnate took the paper. "But what is this stuff, 'I was a silly, stubborn——'?"

"That was when Bert asked what I was doing. And I was writing just that. Here is the paper." She produced a crumpled sheet of letter paper. "You see, that was true, so the rest must be."

"'Win us with honest trifles to betray——' No, don't mind me. I was thinking of Macbeth. What did you find out?"

Barclay told him about the name formed on the table.

"Slee? Slee?" he meditated. "No, I don't know any one by that name." He repeated it thoughtfully. "Now if you write it the other way, Eels, I do know Melvin Eels."

"That's what it is, daddy. Don't you remember Bert said the letters were written backward? Names are almost always written that way. It tells about it in Lodge's book. 'Mirror writing,' he calls it. Give me a pencil."

On a piece of paper torn from her own letter she printed the name Eels in capitals. Then she reversed the paper and held it up to the light. "There. It's Slee now."

"By Jove, I wonder—never thought about him. Maybe. Yes, I believe it is. I've been watching young Eels ever since his father died. He's been going too fast to suit me. He'd be just the one to do some funny business with those railroad bonds. Think I'll go over and see him right away."

"And will you let me go with you?" Barclay asked. "I'm sort of in it, too, you know, and if there's any news——"

"Very well, come along. I'll order the car."

As soon as her father was out of sight, Barclay rushed to the phone. "Excuse me, for a minute, Corinne." The city editor was at his desk and the reporter was soon connected with him. "Hold the forms open for the out-of-town edition as long as you can," he begged. "I've found the motive for the Dunston murder, but it can't be released for about half an hour. Put some one onto finding out all he can about bonds called Railroad 4's. I'll call up soon's I can."

"Are you sure of your information?" The city editor didn't like the idea of holding up an edition on the word of a young reporter.

"Didn't I find the motive? Now I'm going for the murderer." He hung up without giving the editor time to reply. Then he went back to the fireplace, but he was all alone. Corinne had gone.

Some five minutes later Mr. Lee and Barclay entered the waiting auto and the chauffeur started. All at once there was a muffled sneeze. From the bundle of blankets on the floor Corinne peeped out. "'Scuse me for sneezing, but those robes need dusting."

Mr. Lee stifled an exclamation of annoyance.

"Well, it's my party, too, daddy. I had to come, and I knew you wouldn't let me if I asked."

Nothing more was said until the car drew up before the Eels residence. "You stay right here, Cora. I don't know what we'll be getting into. Come on, Barclay."

Mr. Eels would see them at once, the servant told them, showing them into the salon. It was a pale, nervous man who came in. His glance was shifty, and he kept twitching and peering about.

Mr. Lee went directly to the point. "I'd like to get some information about those Railroad 4's." The shot went home. Mr. Eels was chewing nervously at his finger nails. "You know Dunston——"

"Stop! Stop!" Eels whined. "I didn't kill Dunston."

"Who said anything about killing Dunston? I want to know what you did with those bonds you promised to keep." Mr. Lee strode over and looked down at him menacingly.

"Yes, yes. I'll confess. I knew it was only a question of time with them and thought I'd convert them without getting caught, but Dunston——" He caught himself up with a gasp.

Barclay could contain himself no longer. "But Dunston found you out, so you went there, tore the letter he wrote you from his files, and hid by the window till he came. Then you *murdered* him." He shouted the word out.

With an agonizing scream Eels leaped from his chair, and before they could detain him fled down the hall.

"Quick, catch him," shouted Mr. Lee.

They reached the door through which he had fled to find it locked. They listened, but no sound came from within. Barclay knocked. No reply. Again they knocked. Another pause.

"Open or we'll break down the door," Mr. Lee threatened. Both men put their weight against the door. It creaked and gave a little. "Once more, now!" They threw themselves against it. From inside came a sort of cough, and the sound of metal hitting the floor. Then they heard the thud of a falling body.

"Maxim Silencer," Barclay exulted. "That's why the clerks heard no noise when he shot Dunston." Stepping back a few paces, he rushed against the door, his shoulder crashing into the wood just at the knob. The door gave, and he fell headlong into the room, landing just beside the body on the floor. A hole in the forehead showed that Mr. Eels was indeed dead.

On the desk, its ink not yet dry, lay all that he had time to write before they broke in. "Even changing my shell into his revolver didn't protect me. I killed Dunston. God forgi——"

"My story!" shouted Barclay. "Where's a telephone?"

Mr. Lee pointed to a table in the corner of the room. In a very few words the reporter gave the details to his editor and set a research man on the biography of Melvin Eels. "I'll be right down to cover the rest of the story myself," he promised. "What? Oh, thank you. Yes, indeed I heard."

Before he could say anything more they heard a scream. There in the doorway stood Corinne swaying. She had covered her eyes from the sight on the floor. Barclay was at her side in an instant, and he and her father carried her to the salon, where she lay pale and trembling on a sofa.

"Was he—daddy—was——?"

"Yes, dear, he confessed before he——"

"And Bert found him?"

"And I had my salary raised $25. The owner was there in the office. He told me. Is that the 'substantial increase' you wanted, Mr. Lee?"

"Do you think I cared about your salary, young man? The money meant nothing to me. I knew you had the ability, and wanted you to show it."

"Well, he did, daddy. Say he did."

"Yes, he did. He used just the right time to accuse him. Yes, it was partly brains, and partly luck, and, as I understand it, partly a friend in the next world."

"And mostly the girl he's going to marry. Say yes, daddy, say yes."

"With both of you against me, I'll have to surrender. I couldn't say anything else. But who's going to inform the police?"

Neither of the young people made a move toward the telephone, so he repeated the question. They were in each other's arms. "Well, I suppose I'll have to, then." He left the room smiling broadly.

"I'll tell them the *Daily Blade* reporter discovered the murder," he called back from the doorway.

"And if Dugan's there, tell him the dead broke silence, or—— No, don't tell him anything. Why make him unhappy when I'm so very happy?"

"Are you, Bert?"

"Um hum," was all he could murmur. His lips were otherwise engaged.

EGYPTIAN TREASURES UNEARTHED IN SYRIA

GEN. GOURAUD has informed the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles' Letters of an important discovery made by M. Moutet, who was sent by the academy to carry on archæological work in Syria. In excavating on the site of the ancient city of Byblos what appears to be the entire treasure of an early Egyptian temple was laid bare only three feet below the surface of the ground.

Among the objects discovered are statuettes in bronze, gold, ivory and bronze ornaments, crystal and cornelian beads, gold coins and an alabaster vase, intact, mentioning Pharaoh Hounas, of the fifth dynasty, who reigned 2,500 years before the Christian era. The discovery is of special interest, as it proves that the Egyptian penetration into Syria took place at a very early date.

Strange Finds on the Ocean

IF the sight of an abandoned wagon on the great prairies is one calculated to inspire feeling of lonesomeness, what must the sight of a derelict or abandoned vessel far out at sea call up in the minds of the discoverers? I have been looking and hoping for the last twenty years that I might come across a painting representing a derelict in mid-ocean, but I have visited gallery after gallery in vain. The marine artist gives us ships under full sail; ships lying to in a gale; ships plunging through storm-tossed seas, or rocking on the placid ground swell; but his brush never brings out the derelict. While I cannot find a sketch or painting, I can go back in memory and call up certain visions which stand out more clearly than a picture painted but yesterday.

One bright summer morning, while we were headed up for San Francisco from the Sandwich Islands, and when about 250 miles on our voyage, the lookout reported a wreck almost dead ahead. In half an hour we were up with it and as the wind was light and the sea smooth we lay to for an investigation. It was a French brig, as we all guessed before we had seen her name. Her foremast was gone, broken off about four feet above the deck, her maintopmast gone, her jibboom broken off, a great portion of her bulwarks carried away, and all this raffle was trailing alongside and surrounding her. The main yard was still in place, but the sail was in ribbons, while a perfect tangle of ropes encumbered the after deck. She was loaded with wool and timber, and though waterlogged could not sink. Everything indicated that she had been abandoned for many days, but the captain felt it his duty to investigate as far as possible. I was ordered to take a boat's crew and pull off to her and set her on fire, as she was a dangerous menace drifting about in that condition.

An abandoned vessel is a haunted house to a sailor. I pulled myself aboard, hoping that everybody had got safely away, and yet dreading to make some terrible discovery. With a little more sea on, her decks would have been awash. As it was they were bone dry under the rays of the morning sun. I had to creep and crawl and twist about to get through the raffle on deck and I reached the cabin to find it full of water, as might have been expected. The skylight above it had been smashed, and as I looked down and the roll of the brig let the sun in, I caught sight of the clothing of a woman as her body was drifted to and fro. She was face down in the water and her arms clasped above her head. Had it been possible to enter and overhaul the cabin no money could have tempted me to go nearer with that body floating about. The cover of the after hatch was splintered and broken, with the water in her hold spurting up in jets every time she lifted or fell, and as soon as I had made out her cargo I knew that she would have to be fired.

When I went forward to investigate the forecastle I found the slide off the hatch and the very first look into the place gave me a shock. Two human feet, soles up, were the first and, indeed, the only things to meet my view. At least one person had been drowned in the cabin, but there might be three or four in the forecastle. I now looked about for a place to start a fire, and it was while I was getting ready to kindle one at the foot of the mainmast that I found a silver tobacco box with the name Jean Langlois engraved on the lid. This was afterward identified as belonging to the captain of the brig. I did not leave her until I had a smart fire blazing around the mast and, before we were out of sight of her, everything above water was feeding the flames. The matter was duly reported by our captain and several months later we learned that none of the crew of the ill-fated brig had ever been heard of. She must have been

struck by a squall, but whether her people were washed overboard or abandoned her and were lost in their boat, no one could say.

A derelict with a history was the Scotch ship Heather Belle, bound from Glasgow to Shanghai, and the fate of her people has been a forecastle mystery in hundreds of crafts. This ship was last spoken when within 850 miles of Cape Town, at which port she was, of course, to call on her way around. She was spoken by an English man-of-war, and reported all well. She had ten passengers, a full crew, and her captain was a veteran who had made many voyages. We followed the Scotch ship with the English ship David Trulo after about ten days, bound also for China after the same sort of cargo; but as she was the better sailer, and had such a long start, we had no thought of overtaking her. She had passed entirely out of our minds long enough before we neared the Cape and one afternoon, when we raised a ship off our starboard bow, the Heather Belle could have been in no one's mind. It was light weather and the stranger was no sooner sighted than we knew there was something wrong with her. It was light weather and yet she was rigged for lying to in a gale, and long enough before we got up with her it was evident that she was steering herself. It was a queer sight as we drew near.

There she was, sails neatly furled, everything shipshape, the ship on an even keel, and yet not a living soul to be seen. We rang our bell, blew our foghorn and shouted in chorus, and when we failed to arouse anybody I was ordered to board her. I pulled off, expecting to find everybody dead or dying of some epidemic, but to my amazement not a single person, living or dead, could be found. Her boats were gone and there were evidences that they had been outfitted with water and provisions, but why had this step been taken? I sounded the well and found only the ordinary bilge water. She smelled sweet and clean, had plenty of water and provisions and there was nothing to show that she had met with accident or rough weather. I had been aboard her half an hour, and was in the cabin after her papers, when the man I had left on deck in charge of the boat's painter called to me. Our ship was signalling and I was no sooner on deck than I saw a squall brewing down in the southeast. We got it before we were fairly alongside our ship and the fierce gusts were followed by such thick weather that we lost sight of the derelict within an hour. It was more than likely that she foundered in the squall. As I reported no one aboard, we did not feel it our duty to investigate further, but laid our course as near as we could for the Cape.

Nine days after I boarded the Heather Belle along came the American ship Odd Fellow. She was Calcutta bound and 150 miles from Cape Town came up with the derelict. It was late in the afternoon, with a fresh breeze and a heavy sea, and when the American had satisfied himself that the ship was abandoned he would not risk the safety of a crew to board her. She was drifting to the south, but standing up like a rock, with every spar and rope and sail in good condition. Thirteen days later the English ship, Jennie Cliff, tea-loaded and homeward bound, was looking up to the Cape after a gale which had blown her to the east of her course, when, one noon day, the Heather Belle was sighted dead ahead. She was now to the eastward of the Cape, fairly into the Indian Ocean, and 500 miles from where the American had sighted her. The derelict's maintopmast was gone, some of her sails blown away, and her standing rigging had slackened away, but she still rode high and dry and was in no worse condition than the craft which sighted her.

The mate was sent aboard to investigate, and he reported that she could have sailed into port, but the Cliff had no men to spare for that purpose. Had she been waterlogged the captain would have fired her, and, as it was, it was his duty to have scuttled her. He hadn't the heart to do so, however, and three weeks later a Scotch whaler coming out of the Antarctic Ocean descried and boarded the derelict again. Her masts still stood and her hull was perfectly sound, but she had suffered in her rigging and some of the yards were on deck. There was a heavy sea on when she was overhauled this last time and the whaler did not get within half a mile of the wanderer, but the captain went aloft with his glass and made out what I have told you. The last ever seen of her she was drifting down into the ice,

and probably the first field encountered sent her to a deep-sea grave after her long and restless voyage. As to what became of her crew and passengers no man has ever learned, nor will it be known until that day when the sea and land give up their dead.

Perhaps as curious an adventure as sailors ever encountered happened to us aboard the English sugar brig Sarah Cross. Her owners at Liverpool were interested in the sugar industry in the West Indies and the brig had been in the trade eight or nine years when I shipped for a voyage. We were to load sugar for Halifax and return to Liverpool with lumber, and it was to the east of the Bermudas that the adventure occurred. I was then before the mast, and in the first mate's watch, and at one o'clock on this night, with a smooth sea and a breeze so light that we scarcely moved at all, I made out a craft of some sort on our port bow. As she was under bare poles and the sky a bit smoky I was several minutes satisfying myself that I saw aright.

When I had hailed the mate he brought his glass and after a long look he growled out that the stranger must have a queer set of sailors on board as she showed no light and not a person could be distinguished on the decks.

We had everything set to the breeze, while the stranger did not show an inch of cloth, but as it presently fell calm we did not run away from her. The mate put the glass on her at intervals. But he found nothing new in the situation and it was not until I turned out after sunrise that I learned she was looked upon as abandoned. There was a light breeze then and we had worked up to within two cables' lengths of the stranger. Every sail was down and neatly stowed, every rope in place, and she had the buoyancy of a duck as she rose and fell to the heave of the sea. It was hard to believe that she was without a soul on board, but we shouted and blew the horn and raised rumpus enough to have aroused a sleeper a mile away, and yet no one appeared.

"It's a queer case—very queer," observed our captain, after holding the glass on her for a while. "Mr. Smith, you had better go aboard and see what is the trouble."

"She may have fever aboard, sir," answered the mate, as he looked very anxious.

"The greater reason then why we should offer our help," said the captain.

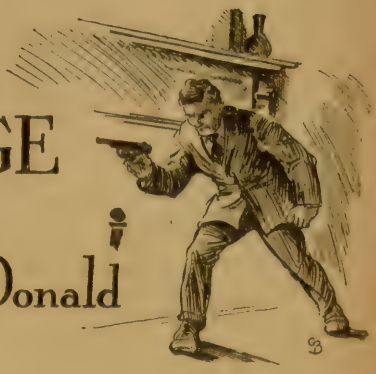
I was one of the three men called to pull the mate off in the yawl, and as he boarded the schooner over her bows he asked me to follow him on deck. When I got my head above the rail and could see her decks clear back to the cabin, and they were clean and white and free from all raffle, I gave the painter a hitch and followed the mate aft. We found the doors of the companionway closed but not locked, while the small cabin and its two staterooms were empty. The bedding had not been disturbed, but not one single garment had been left behind. The galley and pantry were well stocked and everything in order, but there was no key to the mystery here. Every garment had been taken from the forecastle, though two empty bags had been left behind. While the schooner had not been robbed, her papers, flag, log-book, and everything by which she could be identified had disappeared. The boat pulled around under her stern to read her name, but the name and port of hail had been erased and the surface painted over afresh. Lying on the cabin table, as if it were left there to attract immediate attention, was a wallet containing about $3,200 in Spanish money, but not even a scrap of paper besides.

When the mate returned and reported, the captain was pulled off and he was making ready to divide his crew and sail her into port, when a Spanish man-of-war bore down on us and claimed the craft as belonging to the insurgents then at war in Cuba against Spanish authority. It was claimed that she had been chased three days before, and that her crew had abandoned her for fear of being captured, but there were several missing links in the story, and we never felt satisfied about it. As nothing was said and no time to quarrel about the derelict, she was turned over to the man-of-war and the cash divided among the crew.

WITHIN THE COTTAGE

by

Donald George McDonald



THE night wind whistled and the heavy clouds scudded across the sky, now and then allowing the moon a brief glimpse of the earth.

Aided by the moonlight, hindered by the dense blackness, Detective O'Neil vainly tried every skeleton key on his ring, attempting an entrance into a little frame cottage that stood startlingly alone at the foot of a hill.

"Friend," said O'Neil as he bent at his labor, "I'm tellin' you that this bird is no slouch for brains."

The man addressed stepped out from a deep shadow. He was shorter and a bit more stocky than O'Neil.

"'Smatter—won't they work?" he inquired.

"Nope," grunted the older man as he made a last attempt. Failing, he pocketed the keys and, motioning the other to follow, walked quickly down the steps and around to the rear of the house.

"Guess we'll have to cut out a pane of glass to get in," said O'Neil. "'The Gentleman' seems to have made the front door burglar-proof or police-proof."

"Why get in at all?" queried the other. "Why not wait outside and jump on him as he unlocks the front door?"

"Why? You ask why, Mister—Mister——"

"Black," supplied the other.

"Yes, yes—beg pardon for askin', but you're quite new on the force. But, as I was about to say—how much do you weigh?"

"Hundred and sixty," Black replied.

"Hundred and sixty," repeated O'Neil meditatively. "Well, 'The Gentleman'—the guy we've got to get to-night—weighs about two hundred, is as quick on his feet as Dempsey and has a punch up his sleeve that killed a man two months ago just as dead as any .38 could have done it."

"You don't say!" drawled Black. "Then you intend to play 'safety first'?"

"Darn whoopin' I do, my friend. I've got a wife and three kids. The only reason I've lasted this long is by takin' pains to be careful."

"Have you ever seen 'The Gentleman'?" asked the other.

"Never. Never had the pleasure offered me till to-night."

While the two talked, O'Neil had neatly extracted the window pane. Lowering it gently to the soft earth, he put his head and shoulders through the low window and peered into the inky room. An exclamation broke softly from his lips.

"Damned if I won't be glad to meet 'The Gentleman.'"

"What's up?" whispered Black.

"Wait till you get in." There was a moment's pause, then "Come on," called O'Neil in a subdued voice.

The two men climbed noiselessly over the window sill and into the room, then O'Neil leaned out and, pulling up the sheet of glass, set it up on the window ledge to keep out some of the chill wind that rushed across the lonely hillside.

"We can use a flash now," said O'Neil, "so long as we use it carefully and keep the light away from the window." He thereupon shot a beam of light across the floor.

A luxurious, softly patterned rug met their gaze. So rich was its appearance, so soft and fine its texture that simultaneously Black and O'Neil pushed the toes of their shoes into its yielding nap.

"Whew! Some fine stuff, I'll say!" exclaimed the younger.

O'Neil directed the beam of his searchlight rapidly about the room.

An attractive fireplace, the finest of furniture, tapestries and paintings appeared and vanished as the gleam swept the room. O'Neil took Black's arm.

"He is 'The Gentleman,' eh?"

Black did not reply. O'Neil thought he detected a slight quiver pass over his partner.

"What's the matter—gettin' nervous?" he questioned.

"No, it's that beastly wind—seems to have got right to my bones."

O'Neil led the way to the fireplace, felt for and found the poker and turned over some of the ashes. A coal still glowed softly. He picked up a few small chips of wood from the brass hod and pressed them about the lump, fanning them with his broad palm. Presently they caught fire, then both men instinctively reached out to warm their hands.

A moment passed, then O'Neil drew up two tapestry-seated, mahogany chairs. He sank gratefully into one of them and stretched out his legs.

"Sit down," he said to Black, who still stood uncomfortably crouched before the grate. "Sit down—might as well take it easy. No tellin' how long our cultured friend'll keep us waitin'."

Black sat down stiffly. By the fitful light from the fireplace his face looked drawn and pale. O'Neil noted it.

"Don't—don't get sick now, my friend. Try to wait till a more convenient time. You may need every ounce of strength you own before you get through this evening."

For the next half-hour both men were silent. A grandfather's clock in a far corner ticked slowly and distinctly. The small fire glowed fitfully as gusts of wind altered the draught in the chimney. Outside, the gale kept up an ever-changing moan. Far off on the country side there sounded the dismal yet soothing whistle of a railroad train.

A spark snapped from the grate onto the rug at Black's feet. He ignored it and O'Neil quickly stretched over his foot and flipped it back on the hearthstones. He leaned back once more in his chair and gave himself over to the thoughts that the night and the sounds of the night had formed in his mind.

He recalled that he had been on the force for twenty-five years. He had entered it as a young man of twenty-five looking for the excitement and the adventure he thought such a life would bring.

Well, he had found that excitement. He had faced every type of criminal from shoplifter to murderer and he had braved death hundreds of times.

On several occasions he had been wounded—twice severely. Ten times he had been cited for conspicuous bravery. His record was one of which he could well be proud.

His wife had been his partner all those years. Day in and day out she had seen him leave the house in the morning with the fearful uncertainty tearing at her heart that he might never return. Never a kiss had she pressed upon his lips without the fervent, unuttered prayer that the good God would spare him to her and bring him safely back to her arms. At heart he was like a child—warm and tender and affectionate—bound to his family by the willing chains of love.

O'Neil changed his position. He looked at his partner's drooping head. Reaching over, he seized him by the arm and shook him.

"Wake up," he called softly.

"I'm awake," gruffly replied the man. "I'm wide awake—suppose I'd sleep on my first big job?"

"You're right about its being a big job," said the older man as he gazed into the dying embers. Presently he drew a pipe from his coat pocket, looked at the well-chewed stem and lovingly fingered the smooth, blackened bowl, then, remembering "safety first," gently returned the pipe to his pocket.

"Gosh, I'd like to smoke!" he said to Black. "But I won't take the chance. 'The Gentleman' would sniff it as soon as he came in the door and the undertaker would take care of us after that."

Black stirred nervously.

"You make me tired," he said. "Any one would think this bird was one of the biggest murderers that ever lived to hear you talk."

O'Neil smiled a grim smile.

"I only know 'The Gentleman' by reputation. They say he's a man that puts up a terrific battle and usually comes out on top."

Black said no more. O'Neil got slowly up from his chair and moved about the room, silently, cautiously, shooting little darts of light here and there. Fifteen minutes later he returned to the side of Black's chair.

"Here—look at this!" He slipped a richly mounted photograph into the younger man's hands, then trained his searchlight on it.

It was the figure of a man about forty-five years of age, wearing immaculate full dress. His hair was iron-gray and wavy, his eyes dark and not altogether unkind. His nose and mouth were both straight and clean cut, betokening a firmness and strength that was still further enhanced by a firm chin.

"That's 'The Gentleman,'" said O'Neil. "Not such a bad face, either—scarcely looks like a murderer."

Black looked closely at the photograph, then handed it back without comment. O'Neil slipped away over the rug, replaced the picture and returned to stand before the fireplace with his hands behind his back.

"Now, when we hear this fellow come up the steps," he said, "I'll slip to one side of the door so it will hide me when he enters. You stay here behind this drape, then when he gets to the center of the room we'll have him between us."

An unusually strong gust of wind, which shook the house and stirred the cold ashes in the grate, completed these instructions.

Black shivered.

"Gettin' awful cold, seems to me. Did you feel that wind?" He got swiftly up from his chair and moved over towards the window, O'Neil following.

"Just wanted to see if the glass was still settin' there," he said. Both men examined it and found it unmoved.

O'Neil stepped over to the door and slipped back the heavy bolt that had barred their entrance in the evening.

"What's the idea?" said Black, stepping to his side.

"Air," said O'Neil; "I've got to get some. This room's too darn stuffy."

They walked out into the chill night, closing the door carefully to insure that the catch would not spring. Silently they stole to a deep shadow and sat down, propping their backs against the rail of the porch.

"Great night," said Black in a rather loud and cheery voice.

"Shut up!" hissed O'Neil in alarm at the young fellow's lack of caution. Then he whispered, half apologetically: "I didn't mean it—so short. Best not to talk, though, out here. Sound carries somethin' wonderful, you know, at night."

Black nodded. The next few minutes passed in silence. Suddenly the younger man clutched O'Neil's arm.

"Did you hear that noise?" he whispered.

"What did it sound like?" asked the other, his every nerve and muscle alert.

"Like—like a twig breaking."

O'Neil breathed a sigh of relief and relaxed to his former comfortable position. Every new detective on his first few jobs always heard "twigs breaking." It was invariably the sign of the inexperienced sleuth. He smiled to himself.

"Don't think it was anything," he whispered, "but we might steal around to the back and see if anybody's gettin' nosey."

They circuited the cottage and finding nothing amiss, returned to the front porch.

"What do you say if we go in now?" inquired Black, "I'm gettin' chilly again."

O'Neil nodded and the two passed inside.

"What time you got?" asked Black, heaving a mighty and noiseless yawn, while the other detective slipped back the bolt.

"'Bout ten after one," said O'Neil, consulting his watch. "Gettin' tired, aren't you, partner? Well, there's no use of us both on the job. Goodness knows when our man will show up. Go on over in that chair behind the drape and take a snooze. I'll stay here by the door and wake you if he turns up."

"Thanks," murmured Black. He shuffled sleepily across the rug and couched himself out of sight.

O'Neil drew a chair up close to the door, looked once more sharply about the room and sat down—stiffly erect, the better to keep on the alert.

Five minutes, half an hour, an hour passed. O'Neil found it difficult to keep his eyes open. He stirred painfully and quietly, his joints aching from the long watch. He tried to concentrate on something—anything, anything to avoid sleep. He tried to whip his drowsy mind into active thought. His eyelids drooped and lifted, then drooped again. His breathing got slightly heavier. He was just about to pass into slumber and consciousness and unconsciousness were wavering in the balance, when something cold rested against his temple! Instantly he was wide awake!

"Quiet!" murmured a soft, low voice. "Not a sound or movement."

After a moment of silence the voice spoke again:

"Pardon me, but I must take precautions," and the hand of the owner slipped the detective's revolver from his pocket.

O'Neil suddenly sniffed the air.

"Yes—chloroform," said the voice. "Had to use it on the man at the other end of the room. Couldn't see much of him but his shiny nose; who is he, another detective?"

"Yes," whispered O'Neil, then added: "Would you mind takin' that gun off my head? You've got the drop on me, I admit." The pressure on his temple relaxed.

"Now," whispered the detective, "who are you?"

"Don't you think that a rather foolish question?" parried the other.

"I suspect you are 'The Gentleman.'"

"Correct and thank you."

"You are the man we are here to get," continued O'Neil.

"Really, I never should have supposed so," said the other good-naturedly. "I thought you two just dropped in, or rather *cut* your way in, to get a little sleep."

O'Neil would have given much to see this man's face, but he dared not move.

"Don't kid yourself," he replied. "If we don't get you this time, we will another."

There was a pause. O'Neil's mind was in a whirl. He was totally uncertain as to what might transpire in the next few moments. Certainly, 'The Gentleman' could mean no good, catching his captors, catching the men whose avowed purpose it had been to turn him over to the law and punishment. Suddenly a thought flashed into his mind that provoked his curiosity.

"How did you get in?" he asked.

"You will probably be surprised," replied "The Gentleman," "but I entered by the window, even as you."

"How in——" O'Neil's words trailed off into a number of inexplicable surmises. Nor could he quite fathom them. Surely this man must be a master hand to steal into a house in this fashion without being heard, when right in the same room, he, the old detective, was waiting, ears alert, to catch the slightest sound.

"Just what is the charge against me?" murmured "The Gentleman" in his ear.

"Killing Dave Lewis in a Chicago hotel."

There was a pause, then the other leaned forward until O'Neil could feel his warm breath on the back of his neck.

"Turn around quietly. I want to see your face."

O'Neil, surprised at the request, eagerly complied. He found himself confronting the duplicate of the photograph, dress suit included. He noted the strength of the face and, yes, he had to admit it, its kindliness.

Searching the detective's eyes "The Gentleman" placed his left hand on the other's knee. His right still grasped the pointing revolver.

"Friend—for I believe you are, or will be—I did kill Dave Lewis as you say, but neither you nor any other man, save one, knows how or why that killing occurred." He paused a moment and his large, dark eyes seemed to be piercing the blackness of the room. "I will tell you only the truth and God is my witness."

O'Neil looked sharply, keenly at the man and believed him.

"I was passing through the corridor of an hotel at about twelve-thirty that night," the other continued, "when I heard sounds of a terrific struggle in one of the rooms. Stooping down, I looked through the keyhole and saw Dave Lewis wrench a knife from the hand of a small man. He had just succeeded in forcing the fellow to the floor when I burst in the unlocked door and hurled myself upon him. I had only my bare fists to fight with, but I ripped that knife from his hand, threw it away and tore into him. He went down with a blow of my fist on his temple. The little fellow in the fight had grabbed the knife and fled by way of the fire-escape. He has since kept silent for fear of Lewis's brother. That's his gratitude to me. In saving his life, I have put my own in constant jeopardy. I am hunted like a common murderer, when in reality I did the country a great service in cutting short the life of Dave Lewis—a man of the worst criminal instincts, a man worse than whom there is only one other." "The Gentleman" paused.

"Who is that?" asked O'Neil, his eyes still searching "The Gentleman's" face

"His brother!" snapped the other in a loud and distinct voice, forgetting the sleeping detective at the other end of the room. He gripped O'Neil's knee in a clutch that made the muscular detective wince.

"His brother! The snake, the vermin, the foul offspring of a degenerate; the incestuous rake who killed my daughter and my wife! The man who won his way into my home like a noble priest into his parish and left like a loathsome vulture, carrying in his talons my darling girl—my baby!"

"The Gentleman's" voice rose on the last words which trembled on his dry lips. O'Neil reached over and put his hand on the man's shoulder.

"I believe you," he said simply.

"The Gentleman's" moist eyes searched his own.

"Thank you," he said, recovering some of his composure. He pressed O'Neil's revolver into the detective's hand.

"Here, take this. I don't want it." At the same time he dropped his own gun into his pocket.

"It killed my wife," he continued after a bit. "The girl—my girl—died two months later—came home to die." The last was spoken jerkily. "I have sworn a vow to God that I will rid the earth of this man if I once lay my hands upon him. It was *he* I was hunting for when I accidentally came upon his brother in that hotel."

"Yes, damn you, you shot my brother!" Both men faced toward the fireplace.

Eyes blazing, teeth showing white in the darkness of the room, Black stood facing them. He lifted his revolver and deliberately pointed it at "The Gentleman's" head.

"Now, you damn meddler, take——"

There was a report. Black staggered a step, then fell in a huddled heap to the floor. The weapon which had spoken lay smoking across O'Neil's knee.

FAT MAN STUCK THREE DAYS IN CAVE

A recent order, by which all persons having a waist measurement of more than 33 inches are until further notice, excluded from the Crystal Caverns, one of the famous attractions of the Sequoia National Park, California, has its explanation in a recent accident of curious nature, says Popular Mechanics.

A man of more than average girth attempted to enter the cave, which is reached through a narrow crack between the rocks. He succeeded in pushing in, but reached a point where he could neither go ahead nor turn back, and was held a prisoner between the rocks.

After three days without food, he had lost enough weight to enable forest rangers to free him by clipping away the rocks around him.

The cave entrance is now to be widened sufficiently to prevent the repetition of such an accident.

Mystery Magazine

The feature stories already published in this magazine are worth reading. The following are the titles of the novelettes contained in the numbers already printed.

1 "The Eel Man," by Robert Carlton Brown.
2 "Zitana of Maison Rouge," by F. W. Doughty.
3 "The Mysterious Web," by Armstrong Perry.
4 "Under the Hypnotic Spell," by Dr. H. Enton.
5 "The Silken Sheath," by Crittenden Marriott.
6 "A Fortune Teller's Secret," by Gladys Hall.
7 "The Mystic Emblem," by Marie Coolidge Rask.
8 "The Cards of Fate," by William Goode.
9 "Mr. Bachellor's Apartments," by W. H. Osborne.
10 "The Inner Wheel," by Octavius Roy Cohen.
11 "The Voice of the Valley," by Robt. C. Brown.
12 "The Sign of the Seven Sharks," by Chas. F. Oursler.
13. "Under a Mask," by Crittenden Marriott.
14 "Case 4,444," by Gladys Hall.
15 "After a Million," by Police Captain Howard.
16 "Shadowing the Blue Triangle," by Chas. F. Oursler.
17 "The Case of Captain Fortesque," by Redfield Ingalls.
18 "The Bird-Headed Sphinx," by Edith S. Tupper.
19 "The Double Mystery," by Dr. Harry Enton.
20 "The Magician Detective," by C. F. Oursler.
21 "King Cobra Mystery," by George Gilbert.
22 "The Haunted Corridors," by Wm. H. Osborne.
23 "No Man's Man," by Maxwell Smith.
24 "The Trevor Puzzle," by T. C. Harbaugh.
25 "The Trail of Roses," by Edmund Condon.
26 "The Hindoo Vanishing Clue," by Pauline C. Bouve.
27 "Who Was Guilty?" by Beulah Poynter.
28 "The Evil Eye," by Chas. F. Oursler.
29. "The Thirteenth Door," by Edith Sessions Tupper.
30 "The Game of Detective Carew," by L. Jerome.
31 "Law-maker and Law-breaker," by Beulah Poynter.
32 "The Counterfeit Heiress," by Inspector J. Harrigan.
33 "Tracked to China," by Chief Roger O'Brien.
34 "After the German Spies," by May Halsey Miller.
35 "The Clue in the Box," by Alexander Douglas.
36 "Trained by a French Detective," by Rene Renaud.
37 "A Drop of Ink," by Lieutenant Robt. W. Warden.
38 "The Ten Doctors," by Allan Arnold Fox.
39 "The Stain on Page 61," by Chas. T. Jordan.
40 "A Masked Mystery," by Police Sergeant Kelly.
43 "The Mystery of the Seven Shadows," by C. F. Oursler.
44 "The Sign on the Dragon," by C. Martin Eddy, Jr.
45 "The Magic of Detective Woo Fang," by Frank F. Whitfield.
46 "The Decoy," by William Hamilton Osborne.
47 "The House With 30 Steps," by Ralph D. Porter.
48 "When the Clock Struck 13," by Dr. Harry Enton.
49 "A Piece of Blotting Paper," by Dorothy Weber.
50 "The $200,000 Mystery," by Ethel Rosemon.
51 "The Case of Dr. Brice," by Mary R. P. Hatch.
52 "The Phantom Motor," by Laura Reid Montgomery.
53 "The Blackjack," by William Hamilton Osborne.
54 "The Whispering Head," by Chas. F. Oursler.
55 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by B. Poynter.
56 "The Secret of the Sealed Book," by Ethel Rosemon.
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58 "Alias Louis Vardon," by William H. Osborne.
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98 "Counterfeit Clues," by Chas. F. Oursler.
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Current News

MASTODON'S TOOTH FOUND

One of the strangest relics found in this section of the driftless area of Iowa is a mammoth tooth which was picked up a few days ago by T. B. Schwarzhoff of Dorchester in the north part of Allamakee County, Iowa. The specimen, which has been identified, it is said, is a molar tooth of a mastodon, measures over eight inches from the crown to the broken points of the roots and is 8½ inches wide. The enamel for the most part is still intact.

MATE TEA NOW GROWN IN FLORIDA

Mate, the tea that is used by many millions of South Americans, has been introduced into the United States by the Department of Agriculture, and the plant is growing well in private gardens in Florida.

The leaves are dried and infused like those of tea; the flavor is said to be similar but a little smoky, and the stimulating properties are the same except that there is less tannin. Those who have used the mate tea are recommending it to their friends.

NEW COLD METHOD OF MAKING PORCELAIN

For hundreds of years the firing of porcelain has been a *sine qua non* in its manufacture. Word has just come from Germany that a Jena engineer named Menkel has invented a process by which the ware can be completed without firing, although it exhibits all the desirable quality of porcelain which has passed through the kiln. The chief constituent is kaolin, as usual, but this is mixed with various other materials and a special "binder" to form a porcelain-like mass. The hardening process is a secret, but we are assured the finished product is not at all inferior to the kiln-baked ware. Painting is unnecessary, since various tints and colors are imparted by the admixture of mineral colors. The articles made of this unfired porcelain leave the molds without trouble. The material is especially suited for the making of buttons which closely resemble those made of vegetable ivory. It can also be used for making insulators, pipes, ornaments, etc.

TO CROSS SAHARA IN NEW TYPE OF AUTO

The French are planning to establish an automobile connection across the Sahara desert. Experiments are now being carried out under the control of army authorities with automobiles especially constructed to cross the sand and climb up and down the sharp declines.

The plan has been elaborated by an engineer, M. Kegfesse, to cross the African desert from Touggourt, the southern terminus of the Algerian Railroad, to Burem on the Niger, 250 kilometers east of Timbuctoo via Ain-Sala, Tanesruft, Tinzouten and Kidul. The total distance is 3,000 kilometers.

M. Kigresse intends to make the trip with six automobiles, of which three will conduct the rest half way. He expects each car to make about two hundred kilometers daily, so that the completed journey will take fifteen days. Each car will carry 600 liters of gas.

Experiments carried out under conditions far more difficult than those existing in the desert have given entire satisfaction. The cars are of the caterpillar type with a rubber band, invented by the engineer Hinsten.

"If successful, the trip will mean the establishment of road communication throughout the whole of the French African empire, which will be enormously important for the future development of that area. The strategic importance is also considerable, which explains why the military are closely watching the experiment.

GHOST-LIKE HORSEMAN'S WARNING

A lone white-clad horseman suddenly appeared the other night in Hawhuska, Okla., galloped through the business section and then as suddenly disappeared. The silent figure bore a banner inscribed with a warning to gamblers, bootleggers and hi-jackers. A shot was fired at the white horseman, but he escaped apparently uninjured.

STEEL TAKEN FROM BRAIN

It is thought Columbus W. Heitzel of Moatsville, W. Va., will be restored to a normal mental condition, following a successful operation for the removal of a piece of scissors from his skull. There is no recollection on the part of the patient's family as to when he met with any accident by which the scissors' blade penetrated his head and how many years it remained in his skull is a mystery. Heitzel has had a clouded mind for seventeen years.

A TELESCOPE FOR MARS

Snapshots of Mars, as if the planet were less than a mile and a half away, are promised by B. McAfee, American scientist and collaborator with David Todd, the well known astronomer, in an article in the Continental Edition of the London *Daily Mail* describing plans for the biggest telescope ever conceived. He says this telescope will solve the question as to whether life exists on Mars.

The instrument should be ready in 1924, when Mars will be nearer the earth than for a century, according to Mr. McAfee. He is planning the telescope on his estate near Deanville. Mr. McAfee writes:

"Prof. Todd found a mine shaft at Chanaral, Chili, over which Mars will be at its zenith several times in 1924. We intend to use the shaft as the barrel of the telescope. It will be sheathed and it will be 50 feet in diameter. The difficulty of a glass mirror will be obviated by the use of an invention of mine—a flat sheet-iron dish 50 feet in diameter, on which mercury will be poured.

"When the dish is rotated at a certain speed the surface mercury assumes the necessary concavity and forms a splendid mirror. Owing to the great luminosity the telescope will give we will be able to make a snapshot instead of a time exposure. A magnification of twenty-five millions will be possible, bringing Mars within a mile and a half. I am convinced that life exists on Mars, and expect to prove it."

Mr. McAlfee will leave for Chili next spring. Prof. Todd and he will remain in Chanaral throughout 1924.

GIANT CACTUS FOUND

Photographs of what is regarded as the largest true cactus in the world with a limb spread of forty feet, have been received at Columbia University from Dr. Henry H. Rusby, 64-year-old Dean of the School of Pharmacy at Columbia, who is leading a party of explorers into the depths of the Bolivian jungles.

The last message from Dean Rusby was written from Huachi on the Bopi River in Bolivia. He reported that trips in this vicinity had yielded many things of great scientific and economic interest. Among the interesting botanical collections which will be brought back to this country are specimens of the "tree of life." This name is a literal translation of the Spanish name "arbol de la vida," which is given to the "Boldo" plant, so-called because of its use by the natives for medicinal purposes.

In telling of the loss of equipment, Dean Rusby reported that the swiftness of the Andean mountain streams and of the Bopi River may be indicated by the fact that very few species of fish have been encountered. The waters of these streams, he reports, are also charged with dissolved mineral matter and suspended particles washed down from the mountains, the water being practically unfit for drinking purposes. At one place he reported purchasing a whole mule load of oranges to provide the party with juice for drinking purposes and to avoid the danger of drinking from the polluted streams.

The members of the party, he wrote, were all in good health and enjoying their experiences. According to plans outlined in Dr. Rusby's message, the expedition was heading for Rurrenabaque, Bolivia, and by this time should be well into the Bolivian wilds.

FINDS CASTAWAY ON SOUTH SEA ISLAND

A twentieth century Robinson Crusoe has been discovered by Professor William H. Nobbs of the geological department of the University of Michigan, on the island of Kusal, one of the Carolina group.

Professor Nobbs arrived in Manila recently after pursuing his geological investigations in the southeast and reported to Acting Governor Charles E. Yeater that he had found Captain Leander West of the American bark Horatio, which was wrecked in 1901 on the Caroline Islands, living on Kusal Island, where he is the only white man.

According to the professor, Captain West was befriended by a native chief and admitted to the chief's tribe, but now he wants to return to the United States. Only five ships, all Japanese, call at the island yearly and Captain West was not able to get passage on any of them. He has been paralyzed for the last year and a half and has not been able to work. He is being supported by the natives.

Governor Yeater said that he would forward to Washington Professor Nobbs's recommendations for the return to the United States of Captain West, who was born in Utica, Ohio.

MANY OF OUR PLANTS ARE IMMIGRANTS

A notable contribution to America's making is the exhibition of immigrant plants and native plants now being shown at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. One of the 2,650 species which grow wild in the neighborhood of New York, 613 are immigrants.

It is interesting to observe how many food plants came from Europe. These include wheat, barley, rice, sugar, tea, coffee, orange, lemon, beet, carrot, onion, parsnip, spinach, turnip. Among those which are native Americans and of which the Old World was ignorant until after the discovery of America, are corn, white potato, tomato, chocolate, tobacco, pineapple, Lima beans, string beans.

Many of our handsome garden plants are also immigrants. These include the tulip, peony, lilac, forsythia and chrysanthemum, while only a few, including the dahlia and snowdrop tree are pure Americans. Among the wild flowers, the natives are Jack-in-the-pulpit, Columbine, arbutus, cardinal flower, Joepye weed, yellow daisy; the immigrants the white daisy, butter-and-eggs, chickweed, white melilot, devil's paint-brush, peppermint, chicory, dandelion, catnip and bittersweet. Native trees are the black walnut, sassafras and ash; immigrants are the mulberry, ailanthus and paulownia.

BETELGEUSE NOT BIGGEST STAR

The existence of greater stars than Betelgeuse, the giant star, whose diameter was measured last year as 300,000,000 miles, was announced recently by Professor Albert A. Michelson, famous physicist and inventor of the interferometer, in an address before the National Academy of Sciences at the University of Chicago.

Antares, a star in the Constellation of Scorpio, was named as one of the super-stars. Its exact size has not yet been determined, but the scientist declared that experiments so far indicated that it was considerably larger than Betelgeuse. Measurements of other stars whose magnitude may surpass either of these will be made as soon as scientific apparatus is perfected.

An improved interferometer is being used in making the new measurements.

Professor Michelson's announcement, although startling in nature, shared honors with statements made by other scientists in the course of the day.

In one of these Professor Raymond Pearl of Johns Hopkins University declared that pauperization and "hospitalization" are weakening the human race.

In another, Professor E. E. Barnard, an observer at Yerkes Observatory and professor of practical astronomy at the University of Chicago, declared that the dark spots in the Milky Way were not holes or openings, but really dark or non-luminous bodies thrown into relief when projected against the bright background of distant stars. "The conclusion," he said, "is that they are cloud masses of dark nebulæ whose light has failed them or which never had any light."

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Among the objects found by surgeons in the human appendix pins are far the most numerous. Dr. S. A. Mahoney reports to the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal the results of an investigation he has been making into the accounts of operations on the appendix, and it will astonish most people to know that foreign bodies are rarely found in that organ.

Dr. Mahoney was able to list only eighty-six cases in the literature of about two centuries, although there are many cases in which fecal concretions were found. Of the eighty-six cases of true foreign bodies, forty were those in which pins were found.

The pin may enter either by its point or by its head, and may lie in the appendix in any direction. It generally does no harm for a long time, but finally perforates the appendix with its point and causes an abcess. Then the trouble is felt.

Dr. Mahoney says that more pins are found in the appendices of males than of females and they are most frequent in children under ten years of age.

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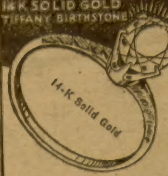

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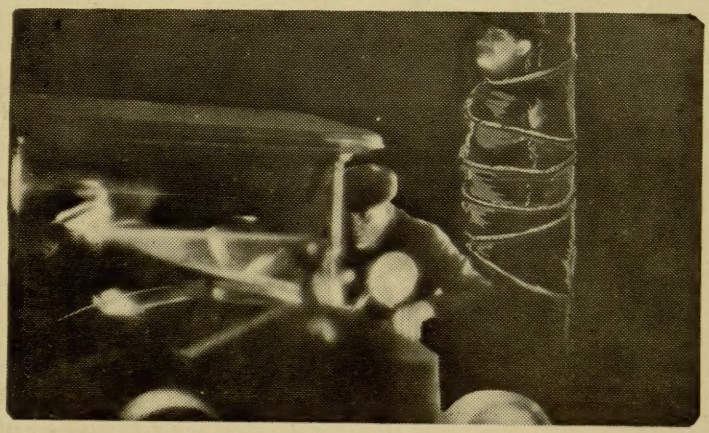
COOL HOMES IN SUMMER

Americans may soon be living in ice houses.

The houses will not be the kind in which ice is stored, but a new type of dwelling designed by Leopold Pollak, an engineer and constructor of Budapest, Hungary. He is contemplating building a house manufacturing plant in Philadelphia so that the public will have a place to escape the sweltering heat without trekking shoreward or northward.

Mr. Pollak said that the houses will be made of infusorial earth and covered with porous bricks. In appearance they will be similar to those used by the natives of South America, who use monkey jugs, or water bottles made of pottery, to cool their homes.

The South American natives place in each corner of a room a water jug, and in a few moments the room is cooled by evaporation. Mr. Pollak does not go into details about his new plan, but states that he can regulate the cooling of a house in summer in a similar manner as that of heating the same building in winter. He said he can make a home as cool as an ice cellar on the hottest day in the year at a cost of approximately ten cents a day.



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